

NEW YORK Dramatic Home

A HOME WEEKLY

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No. 414

HOME.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

Without, the night is chill and cold;
Within the fire is bright,
And shelt'ring in home's happy fold
We dread no storm to-night.

We see the white snow falling fast,
We hear the wild winds shriek,
But listening to the mournful blast,
A smile is on each cheek.

But, ah, this dreary winter night,
How many wanderers roam,
Who shiver at the wind's delight
And know no place for home.

God pity all the homeless ones,
Wherever they may roam,
And grant them, all their wanderings done,
A place in God's dear home.

Happy Jack and Pard;

OR,

The White Chief of the Sioux.

A ROMANCE OF SPORTS AND PERILS OF POST AND PLAIN.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER I.

"MAKES a feller 'most sorry for the old Injun fashion, eh, pard? I can't say as I ever hankered after the 'wimmen critters—they're most gen'ally bad medicine, an' they ain't many lodges big enough to hold them an' luck, too, to my notion; but when I first lay eyes on her, I had to fight mighty hard inside myself to keep from snatchin' her up an' makin' a tail-ou-end race fer it—I did so!"

"There's another man who thinks much the same, or his eyes speak false," quietly remarked the young man addressed, with a slight nod toward the small, flag-draped platform or pavilion. "He must be a new-comer, for I never saw him before."

"They ain't many men as care to see him twice. Take a good squar' look an' see what you kin make out from his face." The speakers—who are destined to figure prominently in this chronicle—were standing a little apart from the main gathering, and both were men who would attract attention in any crowd, though strong contrasts in nearly every respect.

The first speaker was scarcely of medium height; his limbs were small, but admirably rounded, and though at first glance he seemed almost effeminate, his strength, activity and wonderful skill in almost every species of athletics had long since passed into a proverb. His features were clear-cut and regular, and would have been fairly handsome only for the high cheekbones. His face was smooth and beardless, though the hair of his head was unusually heavy, falling in straight black masses below his shoulders. His eyes, though rather small, were wonderfully bright and keen, and few men could meet them fairly without an uncomfortable feeling of being read through and through.

His garments were almost severely plain, of Indian-tanned buck-skin, and minus all the fringes and beadings most men of his class are so fond of. Even his weapons were unadorned. Yet one object about him shone and sparkled in the sunlight: a beautifully-embroidered and ornamented pouch hung upon his breast—a "medicine-sack."

Such was William—or "BILL COMSTOCK," the scout and guide. His career, though briefer, was no less famous than that of Wild Bill or Buffalo Bill, and to this day many a rough voice grows soft, many a hard eye dims, as the memory of the true-hearted scout is recalled to mind. True as steel to a friend—bitter as death to an enemy, he died in harness, nobly performing his duty; and now lies in a nameless grave. Peace to his ashes!

His companion—known far and wide as "Happy Jack"—was of six feet, broad-shouldered, full-chested, with a round, compact waist, swelling hips and long limbs; a model of manly strength and symmetry. His complexion was fair, his features almost classically regular, his eyes large and deep blue. A heavy mustache shaded his lips, while a magnificent choker hung in yellow curls to his shoulders. His dress, like that of his partner, was mainly of buck-skin, and bore traces of recent hard riding and rough living.

"Unless my eyes deceive me," he said, after a steady gaze in the direction indicated by Comstock, "that man is a woman who rarely sees a brave tyrant. God help the man—or woman—whose only hope is in his mercy!"

"I knowed you'd see it," laughed the scout, softly. "That's Cap'n Stone, of the —ch. He led his men such a dog's life that his frinds managed to git him changed to this rjment. I don't reckon he'd 'a' lived through the next scrimmage—indeed, the boys didn't make no secret of it, but said right out that he'd die from ahind, the very first chaines that come."

"He doesn't look like a man who would run from even such a danger," thoughtfully said Happy Jack.

"No more he would—without a fa'r cause," grinned Comstock, nodding toward the pavilion. "To do him justice, they ain't a more dave-devil man, nor a better Injun-fighter then him. But *that's* the little gal kin take him into camp!"

"I feel sorry for her," was the scout's only reply.

The subject of this brief conversation was seated beside a lady near the upper end of the pavilion. Tall, well-proportioned, dark and handsome, a finely-educated man with rare conversational powers, Captain Lawrence Stone was laying himself out to please the young lady beside him with an interest and ardor that he made no attempt to disguise from the eyes of those around. Indeed, so impressive did his air become that the lady arose and hastily approached the edge of the pavilion nearest the crowd. Captain Stone followed, a hot flush passing swiftly across his brow.

The unpollished though sincere praise of the scout had not been unfounded. Kate Markham, daughter of the colonel commanding, was indeed a beautiful woman. That she was barely up to



"That's enough, pard!" cried Happy Jack. "You mean well, but I don't need any man to fight my battles."

the middle height, that her form was full and admirably symmetrical without being too plump, that she was a perfect brunette, with jetty-black hair, clear complexion, rosebud mouth and large, brilliant eyes; all this is easily said, but the words give only a faint and unsatisfactory idea of the reality. With each passing mood she seemed quite a different person—like only in being charming, bewitching in all.

The hot blood mantled her cheek as she felt the presence of the captain at her elbow, and as though dreading what he might intend saying, she hastily uttered:

"Pray—who is that gentleman talking to father?"

"Gentleman!" echoed Captain Stone, with a scarcely-disguised sneer. "Ah, perhaps you mean yonder fellow with the long hair?"

"I mean the gentleman with the golden curls—yes," replied Kate, with a provoking emphasis.

"That is Happy Jack, as men call him, a sort of scout or camp-follower, I believe. I fear though, Miss Kate, that few would recognize him by your description."

"Indeed! after such a proof of your blindness, I shall think twice before believing any more of your previous speeches. Withly exception he is the handsomest man I have seen in a year—and I'm going to ask papa for an introduction."

With a mischievous laugh, Kate Markham ran lightly down the broad steps and approached her parent, but if she really had such an idea, it was frustrated. With a military salute the scout turned away and rejoined his partner.

Colonel Markham greeted his petted—if not spoiled—child with a sunny smile that partly betrayed the deep, almost passionate love he felt for her. Another proof was to be read in the unwonted surroundings; in the draped pavilion, the gay and animated crowd, in the military band now discoursing their best music, in the soldiers who had passed in stately review before the stand, each with the laughing, nodding and excited little beauty; all this, and all that was yet to come, was in honor of her eighteenth birthday. There was to be a general holiday—all who chose were to meet on an equal footing in the games of strength and skill, for the victors in which suitable prizes had been provided.

"Now that I have made my report, suppose you give me an idea of what all this *fanfare* means?" said Happy Jack, as he rejoined his friend, Comstock.

"It's for her, pard. She came out here—from somewhere in the States, I reckon, when she's bin to school, or sich like. She come out here a week ago, an' the old man he 'lowed he'd show her proud he was, by givin' a ginevieve prairie circus. I reckon everybody an' his yaller dog'll be here. They's money in it, too, lettin' alone the fun. The old man don't often git off 'm his reg'lar beat, but when he do, he jist spreads hisself wide open—you hear me?"

The enthusiastic scout hurried off his friend to view the various prizes which were to be awarded to the victors in the coming sports.

For the most part these were particularly appropriate, considering the probable contestants; a beautifully-finished rifle, a brace of revolvers, a sabre, a silver-mounted saddle and horse furniture, together with smaller prizes of money, ammunition, etc. While examining these, the two scouts were suddenly separated as two officers pressed rudely between them. The taller one pointed out the saddle, saying in a clear tone:

"I mean to carry off that prize, and as a proof that I mean what I say, I am ready to wager one hundred dollars with any gentleman."

"Money talks," quickly uttered Happy Jack, shaking off the hand of his friend and facing the officer. "I accept your wager, Captain Stone."

"And who may you be?" insolently demanded the officer, eying the scout from head to foot.

"I said any gentleman."

"I claim to be one, sir, as I will cheerfully

convince you at any time or place you may choose to name. Meanwhile, if you have any doubts, you can settle them by one word with Colonel Markham. Here is the money—cover it, or own that you were talking just for the sake of hearing your own voice."

"You have said more than enough," replied Captain Stone, in a voice that trembled despite his iron nerves. "Lieutenant Blake, will you do us the honor to hold stakes? Thanks. I trust you are satisfied?" he added, abruptly turning to Happy Jack.

"Perfectly," bowed the scout.

"I hope you may be able to say as much by this time to-morrow," and with a little laugh the captain strode away toward the pavilion.

"You've stirred up an ugly devil, pard," earnestly said Comstock, as they turned away from the little crowd. "He's giv' his rattle; he'll not wait long afore strikin'!"

"At any other time or place he wouldn't have had time to do either," was the quiet reply. "He did not crowd us like that for nothing. I can't imagine his reasons, but I feel that he came here simply to pick a quarrel."

"I reckon he couldn't come to a better place for gettin' the best wuth o' his money," grinned Comstock.

"I'll do my best to satisfy him, at least. But now—about this bet; what is the saddle offered for?"

"The old trick—you remember the fun we had down Taos way! Pluckin' the cock—*el grilo*."

"Old 'Paint' will do, then," muttered the scout, glancing toward a curiously-spotted mustang that stood near.

"I wouldn't like to trust Simoom in the scrimmage."

"You'll need a fast an' a good horse, sure. The cap'n is a born devil to ride, an' the tricks he don't know ain't wuth much. You'd better take my critter."

"No—old 'Paint' knows me better, and is plenty fresh enough. See! there goes the gallop—captain with a choice companion for one who will bet only with gentlemen!"

"Injun Dan! the blackest thief unhung! I'd give a hoss to know jist what they're sayin'. Ha! I knowed it! they're goin' to saddle up. Good enough! I reckon I'll take a hand in the game."

"Then you think—"

"I think that ef Mister Injun Dan tries any o' his underhand tricks, he'll run ag'inst a snag. I won't interfere unless he does. You never mind him, but jist keep an eye on the cap'n."

There was no time to say more, for the signal was blown for the contestants to appear before the judge's stand, where the rules governing "El Gallo" were briefly stated. A rooster was buried in the earth, leaving only its head and neck, both plentifully besmeared with grease, above ground. The competitors, their position being decided by drawing lots, were to ride one hundred yards at full gallop, bend in the saddle and endeavor to pluck the cock from its resting-place with naked hands. When one succeeded, all the others were at liberty to pursue and seek to wrest the trophy from him. All maneuvers were fair in which no weapon was used. A post was planted one-half mile distant from the bird. This must be rounded, and then the starting-point regained. The victor would be he who carried home the live bird; or, if torn to pieces in the *melee*, the one who could produce the cock's head.

Then the lots were drawn, and the sports began. Comstock was sixth, Happy Jack seventh, while Captain Stone was last, or the thirteenth man. None but crack riders had entered, few caring to risk their necks unless pretty confident in their skill.

At the blast of a bugle the foremost rider dashed off, passing close beside the buried rooster, stooping low in the saddle and making a grasp at the bird's neck; but in vain. The cock twisted its long neck to one side, and the baffled horseman flushed hotly as his ears tingled with the ironical cheers of the spectators, as, according to the rules, he swept around to assume a position in the rear of the competitors.

Again and again this was enacted with scarce a variation, though more than one of the riders succeeded in touching the bird's head, despite its dodging. Then Bill Comstock spurred forth, riding his grays little mustang like one born to the pig-skin. Differing from his predecessors, the scout lay along his mustang's side from the first, and sunk lower as he advanced until his right hand swept the ground for several yards before the bird was reached. Then he made his grasp, aiming not for the head of the bird, but rather at the point where its neck disappeared below the surface. The bird dodged, but the scout's eye was true, and a shower of sand arose as Comstock, with a wild yell, swung the fowl above his head.

But as many a man before him, the scout laughed out of time. The cock's head was small—it being a pet game-cock which one young but enthusiastic admirer of Miss Kate had contributed, poultry being anything but plenty at the fort—his neck thickly greased, and as though he gave vent to his triumph, Comstock felt the cock slip through his fingers and flutter a dozen yards away.

The moment the judge saw that Comstock's "pluck" had succeeded, he gave the signal for the trumpeter to sound the *melee*, and as though impelled by the same force the twelve riders sped forward. Happy Jack had the advantage of position, and was half-way to the spot when the game-cock went fluttering from Comstock's hands. Then it was that both a horse and rider began to display a skill and activity that called forth cheers both loud and long.

Unluckily for his chances of escape, the bird had got its eyes full of sand besides being sadly bewildered by the rough usage it had received at the hands of Comstock. Scarcely had it recovered its feet when Happy Jack was beside it, and stooping low, firmly grasped its legs, then sped toward the distant post, with a clear, ringing shout that thrilled the nerves of every contestant much as the picking of a banjo touches the springs of a day's heels.

Happy Jack rode in strict Indian fashion, without saddle or bridle, a scrap of buffalo-hide being securely strapped upon the spotted mustang's back. To the stout horse-hair girth were attached several stout loops, while the long mane was knotted together in a style decidedly more useful than ornamental. The use of these devices was speedily made manifest.

With loud shouts, the contestants rushed after the scout who was steadily nearing the turning-post. To all present it seemed as though Happy Jack was urging his mustang to its highest speed, yet he was rapidly being overhauled; but then Bill Comstock grinned broadly. He read the solution of Old Paint's sudden loss of speed.

Just before him rode the half-breed, Indian Dan, mercilessly lashing his big horse with a small coil of rawhide. On this Comstock kept his eye, believing as he did that Captain Stone had come to some understanding with the fellow that involved foul play. And a moment later he had the reward of his vigilance. He saw the savage quickly separate the twisted coils and stoop low in the saddle as his big horse forged alongside the scout, and giving his mustang the spur, Comstock glided forward, just in time to catch the bird as it leaped from the forefoot of Old Paint, but at the same moment a strong hand grasped his foot and hurled him violently from the saddle, completely foiling his dastardly attempt.

Then it was that Happy Jack shone forth in all his glory as a consummate tactician and skilled horseman. He was surrounded upon all hands by eager horsemen, each grasping quickly at the fluttering cock, crowding and pressing around and bringing Old Paint almost to a standstill. Among all none seemed more eager than Bill Comstock, though one in the secret

would have seen that he was actually aiding Happy Jack, and urging the *melee* on toward the now near turning-post. Then it was that Old Paint played his part in genuine mustang style, biting, kicking and plunging furiously as the horses crowded him, all the time edging slowly but steadily toward the post. And Happy Jack—a dozen eyes could not have followed his motions. Now erect, holding the cock high above the wildly-gesticulating hands, now lying low upon Old Paint's back; again, hanging by one foot in a loop, his body almost touching the trampled sands, first on one side, then the other, and more than once slipping entirely to the ground when pressed too close; but all the time working his way toward the boundary, and never once losing his grasp upon the now loudly-squalling cock.

Then, for the first time, he called upon Old Paint, and right nobly the mustang responded, plunging ahead with an impetus that would not be denied, bursting clear through the crowd and sweeping around the boundary post. Happy Jack holding the cock aloft that all might see, then making a bold sweep over the prairie, the spotted mustang developing a burst of speed that astonished all who had rated him according to his first display.

Though now leading the race, Happy Jack saw that his work was not yet done. Just abreast him rode one man, who thus far had been contented with hanging upon the edge of the *melee*, though closely watching every move in the rapidly-shifting game. Keenly Happy Jack looked at the big, clean-limbed black, and uttered a low whistle that sent Old Paint forward as though hurled from a catapult. But the big black kept its distance, apparently without any extra effort. Indeed the taut reins told a plain story of more speed held in reserve.

The scout saw, too, that unless there was a speedy change, the two horses would come fairly together long before the goal was reached. Already the distance was so short that he could plainly read the sneering smile that curled Captain Stone's lips, and in that moment he knew that he would rather suffer death than defeat at the hands of such a man. Yet he dare not slacken his speed, for that would be to plunge again into the thick of the crowd, and his exertions were beginning to tell upon Old Paint, who had covered over a hundred miles within the last forty hours.

He had little time for thought. The goal was now close at hand, and Captain Stone could afford to dally no longer. He loosened the reins, and the big black was beside Old Paint almost at a bound. And in the instant that intervened, Happy Jack read the purpose of his rival. He saw the devilish glitter in the stern black eyes, he read the vicious smile as the strong hand pulled hard upon the cruel curb. The black horse reared high in the air—then plunged madly forward as the reins were suddenly relaxed, his hoofs striking fairly upon the spotted mustang's back, just where Happy Jack had been sitting an instant before, crushing him to the earth, and almost losing its own footing.

A cry of horror arose from the gathering, as they saw the mustang go down—but then a wild, prolonged, and enthusiastic cheer arose, as they saw the scout leap from the ground and alight upon the black horse, directly behind the soldier, saw him struggle for an instant with his rival, then guide the black horse swiftly on—to the winning post. They saw that he still held the cock, that his arms held those of Captain Stone pressed close to his side, his own hands grasping the reins and bird, as he paused before the judge, who promptly nodded his head.

Then the scout sprung lightly to the ground, with an absurdly polite bow to the almost suffocated captain, whose lips fairly frothed with rage and mortification.

CHAPTER II.

WILD SPORTS OF THE PLAINS.

"GIVE me a knife—a pistol, somebody—quick!" snarled Captain Stone, fairly crazed by the loud cheers and peals of laughter that greeted the bold exploit of the scout. "Curse you! I'll tear your heart out!" and he sprang to the ground, striving toward the smiling scout, evidently bent on mischief.

"Here you've got it, cap'n," cried Bill Comstock, as he leaped between the two, confronting the infuriated officer with a cocked and leveled revolver. "Here's the bull-pup you was axin' fer—an' its bite means sudden death, too!"

"That's enough, pard!" cried Happy Jack, thrusting the scout aside with a strong hand. "You mean well, but I don't need any man to fight my battles."

"Down with that weapon, Comstock! down, I say, or your arm will be one hand the shorter!" rung out a stern, commanding voice, as Colonel Markham galloped to the spot, his sabre flashing brightly. "And you, Captain Stone—a fine example you are setting the men! For shame, sir!"

"He insulted me—it was a foul trick—"

"And how much better was your own conduct—or rather, how much worse! Bah! do you think to daunt me with your black looks? I watched you closely—I saw your every movement, and had you succeeded in your attempt, a man would be lying out yonder with a broken back, instead of that poor horse. No reply, sir; consider yourself lucky that I do not order you under guard for attempted murder."

"It was but the fortune of war, colonel," interposed Happy Jack. "If I am content to pass it by, surely there need no more be said."

"If my conduct needs any defense, it will not be made through *your* lips," said Captain Stone, suddenly recovering his usual self-possession. "Lieutenant Blake, you will please cancel that debt. And now, sir," he continued, as the money stake was placed in the scout's hands, "one word with you in private."

"Not another word!" firmly cried Colonel Markham. "Captain Stone, you will come with me."

For an instant the eager spectators believed that the captain was about to give an angry refusal, but they were disappointed. Saluting stiffly, Captain Stone followed his superior officer to the pavilion.

"I come mighty high playin' the fool, jist then, old man," said Comstock, "an' I'd a' let daylight clean through the critter, ef you hadn't ketch'd my arm."

"You meant well, Bill, I know that; but I'd rather fight my own battles, all the same. I

AN IDYL OF THE PAST.

BY WILLI M. TENNYSON HEATON.

The sunset kissed the yellow hill,
In the v. e. the first star shone,
Twilight shrouded off and mill,
And darkened hall and home,
From o'er the wave the vesper bell
Rung forth the hour of prayer—
On the tower the moonlight fell,
And on the stony stair.

The wind swept up the river plain—
A gentle summer breeze—
Crept along the winding lane,
And o'er the dewy leas,
Around my heart the shadows fell—
Only a word—
But sadder seemed that last farewell
Than a farewell to the dead!

Wife or Widow?

OR,

ETHELIND ERLE'S ENEMY.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "A GIRL'S HEART," "A DANGEROUS WOMAN," "THE WRONGED HEIRESS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

INVESTIGATIONS.

"A moment stop! my lord, my lord,
Spare him—I kneel to you and wet the ground
With tears." —BARRY CORNWALL.

Poor Dolores passed an anxious and sleepless night after the committal of her husband for trial.

About nine o'clock the next morning, having dressed herself in a suit of plain black, and put on her bonnet and shawl, she was about to leave the house when Aunt Jerry stalked out in the drawing-room, and planted herself directly in the way.

"Where are you going?" she demanded, in a curt tone.

"To visit my husband," Aunt Jerry drew herself up with an angry snort.

"Your husband?" she sneered. "That wretch is no more your husband than I am. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Dolores Glyone."

Dolores bit her lip, and made an effort to pass on; but again she was intercepted.

"Stay where you are, you rebellious child. With my consent, you shall never pass out of that door bound on such a reprehensible errand."

"It is my duty to go," said Dolores, gently but firmly.

"Duty!" shrieked Aunt Jerry. "It is your duty to yield obedience to those who are older and wiser than yourself. Go back to your room, miss."

"I cannot. My husband expects me; I must go to him."

"I forbid you to go," Aunt Jerry said, in a voice of command.

"But you have no authority to control my actions. I owe submission to none save my God and my dear husband."

Aunt Jerry trembled with passion.

"Girl, is it your deliberate purpose to defy me?" she raved.

"No, I have no wish to do that," said Dolores, still speaking in a calm and gentle voice, though there was a flash of fire in her brilliant dark eyes.

"But you should not usurp authority that does not rightfully belong to you. If you do, I have no resource but to rebel."

There was a silence. Suddenly Aunt Jerry caught hold of the girl's hand—her own was cold as ice—and saying "Come with me," in a dry, hard voice, drew her forward into the drawing-room. All that was mortal of Egbert Challoway lay there waiting for the last rites, which were to be performed at a later hour of that same day. The burial had been postponed as long as possible that Raymond might be present and superintend arrangements himself.

Aunt Jerry drew the shrinking girl close up to the coffin, which stood in the middle of the darkened room.

"Look there!" she said, in a raised voice, uncovering the face of the dead. "Look at your poor, murdered grandfather, and then go to the wretch who assassinated him if you have the heart to do it!"

Dolores burst into tears.

"Don't, Aunt Jerry. You shock and distress me. My burden is heavier than I can well bear, already."

Struggling clear of those relentless hands, Dolores hurried back to the hall, and sinking on a chair, gave way to a perfect storm of sorrow.

"You do feel ashamed of yourself—that is evident," said Aunt Jerry, grimly, for she had followed the girl out.

"No, it isn't that. But a trouble like this is so horrible. Sometimes I almost give way. But Vincent is innocent of poor grandpapa's death! Did I not believe this from the depths of my soul? I should shrink from him in as great horror as you do."

"Poor fool! Did not the murdered man's very last words fix the crime upon that villain?"

"It was a mistake—a dreadful mistake," shivered poor Dolores. "There was no light in the room, and grandpapa must have taken some one else for Vincent."

"Poor deluded fool!"

"I would stake my life on his innocence, and have told him so."

"You intend to cling to him in spite of everything?"

"I do."

"Mad girl! It is a wonder that your murdered relative does not rise out of his coffin to reproach you."

Dolores resolutely wiped away her tears.

"Appearances are very much against my husband," she said, very low. "But that is no reason why I should condemn him. Some day, this mystery will be cleared up, and I shall try to be patient until that time comes."

And before Aunt Jerry could raise another objection, Dolores had quietly stepped past, and left the house.

Like all gentle, loving women, she listened not to the voice of reason, but to that of her heart. In spite of the damning evidence against him, it was simply impossible for her to believe Vincent guilty of the heinous crime laid to his charge.

She found him pacing the floor of his cell, pale but calm. He had already had an interview with Mr. Nolan, the attorney who had been secured to defend him, and the man had just gone away with the frank admission that the case promised to be the most difficult one he had ever handled.

At the sight of his wife, however, the prisoner attempted to banish every appearance of concern from his manner and countenance; and embracing her, said cheerfully:

"You come into my cell like a sunbeam, Dolores, only you are much more welcome."

"I have brought you a little package," said Dolores, speaking in a hurried tone, to hide her agitation. "Here it is," and taking a roll of bank-notes from her pocket she spread them on the little table underneath the window.

"Why, where did you get so much money?" Vincent asked, in a tone of surprise.

"It was intrusted to me by your sister Ethelind before she went away, yesterday afternoon. She said this would secure a great many comforts for you might otherwise be compelled to do without. And she wished me to urge upon you the necessity of employing the very best counsel in the State for your defense. Her purse is at your command."

"Heaven bless her!" cried the poor prisoner, in a tone of deep emotion. "I know she would do anything for the world to help me."

Then, forcing a smile, he added:

"I feel very rich, darling. See, I can duplicate the sum you have brought, note by note."

So indeed he could. For, producing a second roll very similar in appearance to the first, he placed a note of like denomination upon each of those Dolores had laid down.

Looking into her wondering eyes, he said:

"This is Colonel Falkner's gift. He pushed the money into my hand when he came to say good-by."

"I am very glad."

Before she could add another word, the cell-door was opened, and the warden ushered in a small, quiet-looking man who proved to be none other than our old friend, Detective Ferret.

When the warden had withdrawn, and Vincent turned to greet the detective, Dolores placed herself beside him and said, eagerly:

"I intended this as a surprise, my love. I sent for Mr. Ferret, and have secured his services that the mysterious crime for which you suffer may be thoroughly investigated."

"Thank you, Dolores. It was, perhaps, the wisest thing you could have done."

Mr. Ferret quietly helped himself to a chair.

"What defense did you offer at the examination, Mr. Erle?" he said, fixing his light gray eyes upon the young man's face.

"None, except to put in the plea of 'not guilty,' and assure the magistrate and jury that I had left Mr. Challoway's grounds immediately after parting with Dolores, and had set out for Glenoaks without a moment's delay."

"What proof did you offer to substantiate your statement?"

"Alas, I had none save my simple word."

The detective appeared to ruminate for some time. At length he said:

"You may tell everything you can remember that has any bearing upon the events of that fatal night."

Vincent and Dolores, together, were enabled to give Mr. Ferret a very clear idea of the events that had already come to light.

The two points in which he manifested particular interest, however, were those of Madam Zoe's mysterious disappearance, and the fact that Aunt Jerry had encountered a woman in the corridor when she was hurrying down-stairs after having been aroused by the cries of the murdered man.

"Where do the friends of this Madam Zoe reside?" he inquired.

"I do not know," Dolores answered; "but it is my belief that she resided in the South before coming to Dingle Dell."

"Who recommended her to Mr. Challoway?"

"She brought no testimonials. I have heard Aunt Jerry say. In the first place, she was taken on trial; but her duties were performed in a manner so satisfactory that she was permanently engaged."

"Did she never allude to her former life?"

"Never. Indeed she seemed averse to speaking of it even to answer such questions as might, from time to time, be asked."

"Of course she received letters occasionally from her friends?"

"No, sir. None ever came for her."

"That is strange," said the detective, in a musing tone.

"It is believed by some," said Dolores, looking up quickly, "that Madam Zoe could give important testimony in this case, and has withdrawn herself for that very reason."

"Humph!" muttered Mr. Ferret, shaking his head.

When he left the prison, however, he went directly to the railway station, and inquired for the night-agent. The man could throw no light upon the mystery, however. He had been at his post the night in question, but was certain that no lady had purchased a ticket of him, though several gentlemen had done so.

"How far is it to the next station?" Mr. Ferret inquired.

"Four miles," said the night-agent.

"Above or below?"

"Below."

Mr. Ferret hurried to the nearest livable stable, and hired a boy to drive him down. Having reached his destination, and found the station-agent, his first question was this:

"Do all the night-trains stop here?"

"Yes, sir," was the ready answer. "They take in wood and water at this point."

"How many night-trains are there?"

"Four, all told, sir—that is, I mean two each way," replied the station-agent, a big, rough-looking fellow who seemed to be something of a gossip.

"They pass each other here."

"At what hours?"

"Ten in the evening and four in the morning."

"A great many people take tickets from this station, I suppose?"

"Well, not so very many, sir," said the man, scratching his head. "Such as do, come, for the most part, from the village one mile below, down in the hollow. Some days there are half a dozen; and very often, at night, there's no body."

"Can you tell me if there was anybody to take the four o'clock train, Tuesday morning?"

"Tuesday? Let me see! That was the morning after poor old Mr. Challoway was murdered."

"Yes, I believe so."

"Why, bless you, sir, there were two, that morning, and cur's customers they were, too. Never opened their heads to speak to a body, if they could help it."

"Men?"

"No, sir, a man and a woman. The man was all muffled up about his face. He rushed up, just as the train was ready to start, threw down his money and asked, in a squeaky voice, for a ticket to B—."

"I gave him one, and he climbed onto the rear car just as the train was moving off."

"Did the woman go by the same train?"

"No, sir. She went in the opposite direction; and I should have told you about her afore, for she was the first to leave. She came in all alone, about three, and inquired about the trains. She said a few words, and then went out; and of course I stepped to the door and looked after her. She was walking up and down the railroad track, sir, as if she was on a wagger."

"Did you see her face?" asked Mr. Ferret, eagerly.

"I did not. She was dressed in black, and had her veil down. I don't think she was a young woman, sir; but she was straight as a sapling for all that. She purchased no ticket, but I saw her get aboard the down-train. There was something cur'ous about that woman, sir."

The detective was of the same opinion; but he merely said:

"Have you any grounds for thinking that the man and woman were acquaintances?"

"Not the slightest, sir; and, what's more, I don't think so. The down-train leaves some three or four minutes before the other; and so far as I know the woman came and was gone before the man got here at all."

Mr. Ferret said nothing more, but he mentally decided that the whole circumstance was a very singular one.

CHAPTER XXII.

COLONEL FALKNER'S PERPLEXITY.

"Who that hath ever been,
Could bear to be no more?
Yet who would tread again the scene
He trod through life before?" —MONTGOMERY.

The night was hot and still. Scarce a breath of air ruffled the foliage of the dark old trees that drooped lovingly over the gray walls of Glenoaks. The atmosphere seemed heavy and oppressive.

Until a late hour Colonel Philip Falkner sat in the small room on the ground floor that had been fitted up for a private study, poring over legal documents and reports of famous trials.

He hoped to gather from these papers some hint that might be useful to Vincent; for though there were doubts in his own mind of the young man's innocence, he did not wish to see him suffer the full penalty of the law.

Rising languidly at length, as if wearied out with his long sitting, Colonel Falkner proceeded to the open window, and after standing there a moment, stepped out. The crimson curtains fell together behind him, and the lamp that still

burned within was the only indication that the room had been inhabited at all that evening.

Gray, leaden clouds covered the whole heavens like a pall. Even the night-birds were still; and the heavy, oppressive scent of flowers filled the air almost to faintness.

Colonel Falkner walked thoughtfully on in the direction of the sea. He had not proceeded far, however, when he saw some dark object flit swiftly from one group of evergreens to another, and pause there as if to rest or reconnoiter, though in all its movements there was an evident desire to shun observation.

"It is Ethelind," he thought. "Rash girl! She should not be wandering abroad at this hour of the night."

Sheltering himself behind a convenient trellis, he waited for the dark figure to come nearer. Several minutes elapsed before it moved at all, and then, as if in a sudden accession of courage, it started up and glided swiftly past within three or four yards of Colonel Falkner's hiding-place.

To his intense surprise, the figure did not prove to be Ethelind's after all, but that of a strange lady dressed in black, whose head and face were closely muffled in a thick veil.

She glided on rapidly in the direction of the house; and Colonel Falkner, startled, perplexed and curious, immediately turned and followed her, taking care to keep in the shadow and so far behind as not to attract her attention.

The mysterious lady made her way directly toward the window of the study, where the light still burned brightly behind the closely-drawn curtains, and, as if she had been there, she stood for some time motionless, her head bowed, as if either listening or praying.

Colonel Falkner stole a few steps nearer, feeling more bewildered than ever. Suddenly the woman flung up her hands wildly, and a subdued cry escaped her lips.

"Oh, Philip, pity me! My heart is breaking!"

Something in that low, thrilling voice caused Colonel Falkner to start as though he had received an electric shock. It sounded familiar, and she had spoken his name! What did it mean? Did she know of her window she stood, and was she there simply because it was his?

His heart beat a little faster, but he sprang forward, and caught the woman by the arm.

"Who are you?" he sternly demanded.

"There was no answer save a low, frightened moan, and she seemed to shrink away from him as if in deadly terror."

"What are you doing here? Speak!"

In another instant he would have torn away the muffling veil, but the woman eluded the movement, and, wrenching her arm from his grasp, darted swiftly past, and fled, with a shrill cry into the darkest and densest of the shrubbery.

Colonel Falkner followed, but he could not overtake her. The black dress she wore blended naturally with the shadows that everywhere peopled the grounds, and at the distance of a few rods she was completely lost to observation.

He hesitated at last in sheer despair, and at the same instant a bitter, mocking laugh sounded beside him.

"You do well to give up the pursuit, Colonel Falkner. That woman is fleet of foot than yourself—you cannot overtake her."

It was Ethelind's voice, and looking round in astonishment, he saw the girl standing just beyond him, her white, wasted features dimly distinguishable in the uncertain light.

"Ethelind!"

"Yes, it is I! You need not look so shocked."

"It is enough to shock me to find you roaming about at midnight. Are you mad?"

She passed both hands quickly over her forehead.

"Mad? Yes, I have been delirious these few weeks."

"Poor child," he said, in a tone of infinite pity. "I believe you."

"Then my vagaries should no longer astonish you."

"They pain me, Ethelind, deeply pain and grieve me. But you must not remain here. Take my arm, and I will lead you back to the house."

She obeyed, submissively as a little child, and not another word was spoken until he had drawn her through the open window, and they stood within the little study, and the lamplight fell on her pallid face and burning eyes.

"Now tell me why you were in the grounds?" he said.

"I could not sleep, and felt too nervous to remain in-doors," she answered, without looking at him. "Was it a greater crime for me to seek the fresh air than for you?"

"At least it is scarcely decorous for a young lady to be wandering about at midnight."

"I regret having offended against your notions of propriety," said Ethelind; but her tone was proud and cold.

Colonel Falkner remained silent for a moment, his gray eyes fixedly upon the girl's face. Suddenly he heaved a sigh, and said in a changed voice:

"You, too, saw that strange woman I was pursuing?"

"Did?"

"Who is she?"

"Do you not know?" Ethelind asked, quickly, meeting his gaze now for the first time.

"I have not the slightest suspicion."

"Then I can give you the necessary information. It was Mrs. Faunce."

"I leaned toward her with a half-suppressed cry of amazement."

"What! the new tenant of Lorn?"

"The very same."

"Indeed! I wonder that I did not think of her! Yes, I am right. I have been told that Mrs. Faunce always goes abroad muffled up very much like the woman in question."

He spoke in a slow, dreamy tone, like one whose thoughts were busy.

"I did not know why Mrs. Faunce came here," he asked abruptly, after a pause.

"I am not her confidant," was the haughty answer.

"It seems very singular," he went on, as if she had not spoken. "I cannot make it out. Mrs. Faunce! The name is not a familiar one. And yet—"

Ethelind waited to hear no more. Her first impulse had been to tell him of that first visit Mrs. Faunce had paid to his chamber while he lay ill of the wound he had received. But she would not yield to it. Shaking away from him, she glided, without another word, from the room.

"If Mrs. Faunce loves him, and wishes to keep that love a secret, I have no right to betray it," she thought.

Colonel Falkner passed a sleepless night. He tried in vain to banish from his thoughts that mysterious figure, and the wailing cry he had overheard. "Oh, Philip, pity me! My heart is breaking!" But he banished him like a spell. Strange, vague suspicions ran through his mind. Sad, sweet dreams were recalled, and half-forgotten memories. He shivered ever and anon with the creeping feeling that denizens of the other world were around him.

The next morning, urged by an impulse over which he had no control, he ordered the carriage out, and drove over to Lorn. The faithful old woman-servant, Joan Withers, answered his ring. She gave a perceptible start when she saw who was standing at the door.

"What do you want?" she demanded, in her sharpest and most repellent tone.

"I have called to see your mistress."

"Mrs. Faunce does not receive visitors," Joan interrupted, making a movement to close the door.

"One moment, if you please. I am a neighbor, and if you tell her I am here, she will certainly grant me an interview."

"My orders are positive to admit no one."

"I have particular reasons for wishing to see Mrs. Faunce," said Colonel Falkner, in an eager, half-impulsive voice.

Joan drew resolutely back.

"It makes no difference. I cannot let you in."

"You can, at least, take my card to your mistress and leave her to decide for herself whether I am to be admitted or not."

"It would be of no avail. Please go away."

She shut the door in his face as she spoke; and Colonel Falkner, disappointed and angry, had no resort but to climb into his carriage and return home.

The next day he went again; and the day after, but with no different result. He was turning away from the door on the occasion of his third visit, when he encountered the housemaid, Phoebe Jelly. She silently beckoned him to follow her a few steps down the walk, out of sight from the house.

"You seem very anxious to see my mistress, sir," said the girl, abruptly.

"Perhaps you are her lover, sir?"

The colonel felt his face flush; but, looking searchingly at the girl, he divined the truth instantly. She was aware of his unsuccessful visits, and being of a sentimental turn of mind had built up quite a romance in which he and Mrs. Faunce played the leading roles. All her sympathies seemed to be enlisted in his cause.

"I am the lady's very good friend," he answered, "and it pains me to be denied the pleasure of an interview."

Phoebe glanced hastily all round, and then said in a whisper:

"Mrs. Faunce is very eccentric, sir. But whatever secrets she keeps from us servants, I am sure she should have none from a gentleman like you. I think I can help you, sir."

"If you can, you will earn my undying gratitude," said Colonel Falkner, slipping a bank-note into the girl's hand.

Phoebe glanced at it, and her face brightened when she saw its amount.

"Thank you, sir. You are very generous. But I would have done just as much for you without being paid for it. Do you see that old summer-house at the end of the walk we are in?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Faunce will be there this evening, half an hour before sunset. It is one of her oddities. You will find her alone. She's taken a fancy to the place, and goes there regularly every evening."

And nodding her head intelligently, Phoebe turned and ran up the path if he could not take his cue from a hint so palpable, the girl thought, he was not the ardent lover she had mentally set him down to be.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MYSTERY OF MRS. FAUNCE.

"Oh, woman, woman with face so pale!
Pale woman weaving away
A frustrate life at a sunset loom."

There rose and gold of sunset were in the sky, and its reflected glow in the water, when Colonel Falkner crossed a strip of shining beach and turned into a shady green lane where the lengthening shadows were already taking on the faint purplish tinge of coming twilight. Now and then, as he hurried along, he caught stray glimpses of the gray walls of Lorn between the trees, and his heart beat a little quicker as he thought of the strange errand that was bringing him once more into the hallowed seclusion of his grounds.

Shrewd, cultured man of the world though he was, Colonel Falkner felt himself drawn onward by a magnetism he was powerless to resist. The mysterious lady of Lorn had awakened an interest in his mind that could not be easily forgotten. Since the night when he had found her crouching before his study-window in that attitude of utter self-abasement, she had been continually in his thoughts.

"Who is she?" he said to himself, in eager, passionate accents. "Why has she come among us enveloped in such an atmosphere of mystery? I must know the truth—this suspense and perplexity are becoming unendurable. Oh, why is it that she so powerfully recalls the image of another—one lost to me forever—one I loved not wisely but too well?"

Wiping the cold damps of perspiration off his forehead, he climbed the stile in which the lane terminated, and rapidly approached the summer-house to which Phoebe Jelly had directed him.

The low murmur of a woman's voice fell upon his ears as he drew near. "She is there," he thought, and, hurrying on breathlessly, paused in the low, arched, ivy-clinging entrance to the summer-house. The black, muffling veil was drawn tightly over her face, as usual, but she had thrown aside the cloak in which she often appeared abroad, and the faultless proportions of figure that seemed to her personification of grace and beauty were revealed.

Colonel Falkner could not tell whether she had been praying aloud, or soliloquizing; for her voice died away in a low, gasping sound the instant she caught a glimpse of his figure, and, rising to her feet, she stepped quickly there, her whole attitude abject and expressive of terror.

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Sunshine Papers.

"God helps them that help themselves!" quoted a little cousin of mine, who, when denied a piece of dough with which to play, snatched it and ran off. Certainly the child made a practical application of the maxim. He got the dough and he escaped any punishment because his remark was so bright and apropos. And observation leads one to believe that the application of the child made of the quotation is, in real life, the only one where it holds true. Socially, professionally, politically, and financially, the men who say "God helps them that help themselves" and so help themselves to what they most desire, whether it belongs to them or not, are the only persons who by any amount of imagination can make the saying apply to their own cases.

Does God help them that help themselves? Was Ben Franklin as wise as posterity would have us believe when he clothed that sentiment in new words and gave it to the world as a proverb? Had he tested the theory? Did he make the assertion as a truism based upon his own experience, as many a worldly-wise, care-sick man and woman can assert that it is a fallacy as proved by their experience?

If so, Franklin's was an exceptional experience—not a common one. The majority of men who have by their own efforts won any foothold in life, take very little stock in the part that God or Providence has had to do with their affairs!

To be sure there are people who quote that proverb—people who get up in benevolent societies, and church meetings, and snivel and sob about God's "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb," and Providence always providing for those who have faith, and God's helping them that help themselves; and, somehow, their brothers and sisters feel constrained to give them alms, and reward their fine piety with an occasional lift to some little employment, and so in a sort of way—quite satisfactory to their eminently devout and humble selves—they scrape along through the world on other people's money.

But, without referring to that debasing sort of devoutness and humility, thank God there are true-souled men and women in the world who are bound to make their own way or perish in the attempt. And these are the people who take mighty life stock in any help God vouchsafes them. Faith in any one or anything but yourself, and your own I-will-power, is pretty poor sort of stuff with which to buy shoes, and coats, and loaves of bread. God may temper the wind to the shorn lamb, but we are not dumb animals, and He is apt—I think I make an assertion in which general opinion will uphold me—to let us look out for ourselves.

I am irrelevant? Perhaps so! But I speak from personal observation and experience, and I am willing to have my belief entirely revolutionized upon that same basis.

A man possesses wealth, or influential relatives or friends, and is he ever in actual want? He does not need brains, he does not need muscle to assure his success in life. He finds scores of splendid business opportunities open to him without either, and he draws an immense salary for what a man who can only help himself would get the merest pittance. He may be guilty of the most flagrant immoralities, but he will lose neither position nor prestige, but he will swiftly ally himself with still greater wealth and influence. He may commit any crime, even the most damnable, and he will be saved from its consequences, and be pitied, and excused, and petted, and upheld in as good positions, social and financial—as ever.

Surely it is not God who helps these men and surrounds them with His patronage; nor do they help themselves much; but every one else stands ready to help them—so that the lack of Divine help really matters little.

But, the men to whom God's help

would be worth a great deal. Men who have no wealth, no influence, no friends to give them a lift upon the rugged, thorny, uphill pathway of personal independence. Men who have only brains, and muscles, and an overwhelming desire to live, since they have been put into this world, *noles volens*, and to win from life self-support and something of success. But for these men there are no dead men's shoes to step into, no influence to get them this, that and the other position, no get them this, that and the other honor (?) of salaries to be paid them for the honor (?) of their presence in an institution. Where is the merchant who will spend ten minutes of his valuable time, or ten mills of his money, to give such a man a lift? Where is the merchant who will even give him the fair worth of his brains and muscles? Where is the rich man who will advance him a little capital with which to work? Where is the man of business who will say, "Come in with me, and, year by year, as you grow in experience and usefulness, I will deal with you as I pray God my own boy may be dealt with if I should be dead when his time comes to go out into the world?"

If one of these moneyless, friendless, influenceless men makes an error, or commits a misdemeanor, where for him is to be found a word of pity, or charity, or forgiveness, or help? Is there a soul ready to stand tenderly by him and help him to retrieve his error? No, not one! To all appearances, and as far as mortal investigation has gone, the men who have only themselves to depend upon are neither helped by God, nor by their fellow-creatures. They are at the bottom of the hill, and no one cares whether or not they ever get up it; but every one is ready with a kick to keep them down!

"God helps them that help themselves." Ah, me! how like diabolical sneers all these pesty little proverbs must seem to some men! The marvel is that more of these people, who have only themselves to rely upon in this world, do not become criminals or suicides, when they realize what a terrible load life is, at best; when they learn the stupendousness of "Man's inhumanity to man;" the "Rarity of Christian charity under the sun;" the utter lack of religious principle, honor, justice or common humanity in business.

No! the men who make anything out of life, are those who make no efforts to discount Providence. They allow their way through the world, regardless of whose ribs they poke or whose toes they crush; they go on the principle that every man's hand is against them, and their hand against every man; they believe no man good enough to usefully help them, and no man too good to play points upon them if possible; they know that nothing but their own exertions stands between them and starvation, or even woe; and when at last they are able to draw a free breath, and put plenty of food in the mouths of wife and children, is it any wonder that they are grown cynical, and bitter-hearted, and skeptical of God's love?

And, since this state of things must be so until some religion is discovered which is not mere sentimentalism for men to air on Sundays and "prayer-meeting" nights, but a noble human practicality that will invade the social and the business world, why Ben Franklin's proverb will count but as trash with those people who are forced to battle with the stern realities of workaday life!

Better let men take this motto, "Every man is the Architect of his own fortune," and remember that not one human being stands ready to help put a block of his building into place, but the whole world stands ready to tear the fabric down the moment the builder is unable to instantly put the right brick in the right niche.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

ARE YOU "MRS. GRUMBLE?"

WHEN Mrs. Grumble visits me and runs over a string of grievances which she thinks of dire import and truly unbearable, I am apt to speak somewhat quickly, and it may be a trifle impolitely, but I cannot help it. Mrs. G. thinks it is so "shameful" that it should rain when she wants to wear her new hat or dress to church; so "abominable" that the heat should come on so suddenly and before she has had time to make up her summer garments; and she is so "wretched" to think that some one may adopt the newest style or fashion ere she has a chance to do so. And, because I don't seem to consider these evils beyond endurance, she imagines I am cruel-hearted and cold and have no sympathy for others.

Then is the time that "patience ceases to be a virtue," and I exclaim: "Mrs. Grumble, do you think we sympathize enough, or feel enough for those who are really suffering, and do we fully appreciate the manifold blessings we do have vouchsafed to us? Because I do not."

Mrs. Grumble may remark: "What do you mean, Eve?"

My meaning is plain enough, for it's just exactly what I have said. Mrs. Grumble's troubles are trifling ones compared to others. Could she look into the thousands of homes all over the land and see the real troubles, her imaginary ones would appear so small as to be a mere speck.

I have some correspondents who have been invalids for years: one simple room their home and their only view of God's fair creation from their windows. Through the bright days of spring, the gladness, the glow of some of summer, and the ripe, mellow ones of autumn, they must remain in their room, often times the poor body being racked with pain. Are not these individuals more worthy of our sympathy than Mrs. Grumble, and are not their trials harder to bear than hers? Yet they make less complaint, and I have never found their missives less dull on account of the writers' illness. But how many a good lesson they teach me, and how much I strive to profit by them!

When I have a trifling headache I am apt to murmur and complain; then I think: "What should I do if this pain were to last for weeks and weeks instead of one single day?" Then I feel mean and contemptible, and I do wish I was more reasonable and less fault-finding.

We have health, yet how little we appreciate the blessing, and how little we thank our Heavenly Father for it. We can wander and rove to our heart's content, and we can witness the beauty that is springing up all about us, but we plod along and give it no thought; flowers bloom and die, and what care we? God puts gems in our pathway yet we scarcely ever stoop to pick them up, and we load ourselves with imaginary evils, forget those who really suffer, and forget that we are so much blessed.

We say that invalids are petulant and that we hate to attend upon them. Perhaps we are the petulant ones and without half the cause. Perhaps we should be petulant if we had so much to endure. I said "perhaps;" I should have said I know so, because we are so

apt to be petulant over imaginary ones; we should certainly "growl" when the real ones visited us. Maybe a good fit of sickness would be better for us, for it would make us more fully enjoy the blessing of health after we had recovered.

You see, we don't think of all this, we don't think how much better treated we are than we deserve to be, and something should be done to bring us to our senses. Isn't that so?

Of course it is, and if we could but get the absurd notion out of our head that the world was made especially for our benefit, and for no one else's, and that other people had as much right here as we have, maybe we'd be more thoughtful of their comfort, have more sympathy for their suffering, and be more thankful for the comforts we enjoy. Then there'd be less black looks, less harsh words, less growling, snapping, snarling and complaining, but we should all live for each other as it was intended we should.

Are you a Mrs. Grumble?

I hope not, but if you are, come with me and let us, together, turn over the new leaf.

EYE LAWLESS.

Foolsap Papers.

To the North Pole in a Balloon.

THE following letter was written by an uncle of mine many years ago. It was found in a chest of old papers, principally letters of recommendation. (If there was one thing more than another our family stuck to it was a letter of good character. From the number left in the family archives it looks like they were their chief reliance, and that it took a good many of them, too.) The reliability of these statements I do not vouch for. I don't think he ever told a lie for money—he died poor, but it is said that the cause of his ultimate death was telling the doctor that he had the brain-fever when it was the liver-complaint. I therefore will not be responsible for this letter, having as much as I can do to be responsible for my own. WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

I was born in the early part of the last century, or the last part of the early century, I don't recollect which at this date. At an immature age I showed a capacity in finding out things which was wonderful. My devoted mother would spend hours in hiding the ginger-cakes which I would find in five minutes. Did she say, "Benoni, where is that dime I put under the things in the back corner of the lower bureau drawer?" with a very little reflection I could tell her where it was—but I generally didn't. In potato-time I could always find out where the best fishing-place was, and I could always find out where the mince-pies were located without the aid of the compass. My mother used to say I was remarkable for finding out things, for *lost boy*.

On how many days when I was industriously and laboriously working in the garden by lying in the shady fence corner, my mind which was very flighty, used to take flights to the North Pole, and so earnestly did it strive to take my body with it that I eventually made it my determination to reach it. I thought of the incalculable benefit it would be to mankind if a northern passage could be found, and how the shores of the North Pole Ice Company would jump up if vessels could reach its possessions.

All attempts to get to the pole with ships had failed, so I determined to try it with a balloon, and, under my preparation accordingly, and on a very hot day in July I left New York. At the height of two miles I struck a geological strata of air from the south and started joyfully northward. I could look down on New England like looking on a map, only the States were not colored, and in the course of two days was well over Greenland—I recognized its outlines.

My scientific instruments consisted of a sextant, quadrant, hydant, a pair of compasses, and an eighteen-gallon keg, with a mathematical instrument which is called a faneel attached, in connection with some excellent field and table-glasses for observations. I had also an old couple of mine along for company and ballast, with which I could easily lighten the balloon in case I was descending too rapidly.

While crossing Baffin's bay the balloon got wedged in between two winds and wouldn't budge an inch until we both got out and gave it a start.

I was supplied with needles and thread with which to sew up the balloon in case it ripped from top to bottom, and another smaller balloon was stowed away in my valise, to use in case there was a total collapse. I also had a rope-ladder on which I could climb down if the balloon went to pieces. It was firmly attached to the basket, so that there was no danger of its pulling off in case I had to climb down. The balloon I steered with an oak like a skiff. In the bottom of the basket were fastened leather straps which we could catch hold of and pull up on in case we were going down fast. You have no idea how much we could pull on them. They were great helps.

We also had ropes which we could throw down to each other in case one of us fell out. We fell out frequently in the basket, but never fell out of it. The old gent drank so much, he would go to the keg once to my twice.

The further north we got the scarcer the heat became; it let up fearfully. Below us was plenty of ice, but no lemons—more ice than a lay boy in school would ever dream of. You could reach out and catch handfuls of cold. We dared not open our mouths to talk, for the words would freeze between our teeth and we couldn't get our mouths shut. The further north the chillier it got, and by and by, we got into the region where the air was full of floating icebergs, and it was with great difficulty that we shoved them off with poles which we fortunately had along. We frequently got squeezed in between two of them, and if the balloon had not been income-bustible it would have burst, and we would have reached the earth by the shortest route.

When two icebergs would come together, the air would fly like blazes. They were frozen so hard that if they had been set up in Egypt they would last longer than the pyramids. It would take about that long to thaw them completely out. New York folks never saw ice on the rise like it was in that region. The clouds were frozen in huge masses, and rolled and tumbled over each other with the most terrific crashes like enlarged thunder.

Whenever we wished to descend a little we would bear down on the basket with all our might. This we found was very effective, and saved us many an accident.

By the use of a patent arrangement of my own we thawed out the air so we could breathe it, and when we could not otherwise have done, as it was so badly frozen it wouldn't go down our throats.

We were nearly lost once by the balloon getting upside down with the basket on top. We never got so high that we were out of

sight of land—or ice rather, and kept a sharp look-out for the pole for fear we would run against it and knock it out of repair.

From calculations, made from the weight of the keg, we computed we had come several thousand leagues, and by and by we woke up one morning and found there was quite a mildness in the atmosphere! I was elated. I had heard the theory that around the pole was a warm climate, and now I was finding out the fact! What a glorious discovery to take home and get a big name on!

We took another drink.

The fields began to look green below us as we sped on, and the air was growing warmer and warmer. Below us were towns, then cities, thicker and thicker, and all the signs of active and busy life. I said I always knew I was born to make some big discovery, and now to find that the region of the North Pole was not devoted exclusively to pole-ars, bears, pole kittens, ice-poles, and Hungry Poles, was something to make a man feel good even if he knew his wife's aunt was coming next week, with the children. I saw steamships on the open waters and cars on the land, and signs of civilization on every hand! And to think it had never been known before, and I was the Columbus who had discovered this new continent far to the north! I couldn't hold my feelings, and got the old man to help me.

We descended at last. The crowds that flocked to us spoke the Dutch language! Ah, I thought, this country was settled ages ago by Dutch mariners. I inquired the name of this new country. The blamed fools told us it was Holland. We had gone clear past the North Pole and on down into Holland! I don't believe there is any pole.

BENONI WHITEHORN.

Airy-naught.

Topics of the Time.

A train on the Canada Southern Railroad was recently run 111 miles in 109 minutes! This is the fastest time ever made in this country. The run was made between St. Thomas and Amherstburg.

The Chinese are the only nation who know how to cover plates of sheet lead with thin layers of colored glass. They use them on the sides and domes of their temples, to which they lend a lustrous and gorgeous appearance.

The tallest man in the United States is probably Henry Thurston, a native of Missouri, now residing in El Paso county, Texas, and formerly a Confederate soldier, who stands seven feet and six inches in his bare feet. Barnum offered him a large sum to join his exhibition, but he declined.

Pennsylvania was the champion hanging State during 1877. She is credited with sixteen out of eighty-three executions in the United States, or one-fifth of the whole number. South Carolina ranks next, having had twelve shows of this kind during the year. New York, with three executions, is far behind her more enterprising neighbors.

Five Port Jervis, New York, hunters, on an expedition a short time ago, started up six bears in a little piece of wood skirting the Bushkill, in the town of Deepark. After an exciting chase, which lasted two days, they succeeded in killing two out of the six. The news that bears in such numbers roam unmolested in Deepark has created a great sensation.

It is related of General Jubal Early that he would never approve of a furlough when the applicant was to get married. Being an old bachelor himself, he thought that all soldiers should adopt that style of life while the war lasted. He used to say that every officer who married either proved himself utterly worthless or straightway got himself killed.

The death of Henry Meigs appears not to have interrupted the prosecution of the public works in Peru looking to the development of the Cerro de Pasco Silver Mines. Work upon them continues, and is already said to be producing definite results in an increased yield of silver. These mines appear to be destined to attract considerable attention in the future, for their possibilities are said to be so great as almost to bewilder the imagination.

A number of surgeons, anthropologists and scientists in Paris have formed a mutual dissection society. Each member pledges himself to give his remains after death to be dissected by his surviving friends. When a member departs this life, his brethren meet in the *salon* of a restaurant, dine gayly, and, after coffee, a box is placed on the table containing a number of glass vessels, in which the relics of the member deceased are carefully preserved in spirits.

In relation to the marriage of Miss Hannah de Rothschild with the Earl of Rosebery, *The Jewish Times*, of this city, says: "The subject of intermarriages has always been a sore one with the Jews, but we think with little reason. The marriages of Jews with Christians are extremely rare, and there is not much reason to fear their increase. Judaism, which as we believe has been preserved so long by the will of God, is not likely to be imperiled now by the marriage of a few individuals with the members of other churches."

The preparations for the Paris Exhibition indicate that the British will be the most interesting section next to the French, and that the next in order will be the Austro-Hungarian and the Italian sections. Russia and Turkey have done their best, and will be fairly, if not brilliantly represented. A special feature will be the number of Japanese exhibitors. Not fewer than thirty have already secured spaces; and the Mikado's government is going to send a national collection of art objects, which is stated to be at once rich and beautiful.

Mrs. Gaines's brown eyes are described as being as quick and bright as a bird's, and her laugh has a ring to it that shows that much fun remains. A halo of auburn curls around her face lends her a still brighter look, and to the admiring gaze comes easily pass for half her age. Some years ago, in speaking her mind to Chief-Justice Chase, Mrs. Gaines told him that she should battle before the bar until she was 150 years old. "And to think, madam, that this to be kept up 135 years longer," said the Chief-Justice, as he bowed to the active widow.

The systematic efforts at forest-planting that several foreign governments have entered upon, are the source of a new trade from this country. An export of forest tree seeds from California has been established, amounting to \$10,000 worth per year. The principal purchases are made for Germany, Austria, England, and the colonies in Australia and New Zealand; at present the demand exceeds the supply. The seeds of the Oregon pine, known also as the yellow fir, are most sought; the timber of that tree is as good as British oak for shipbuilding, and it has been found sound after eighteen years' use for this purpose. The South Sea colonies are planting the California redwood tree extensively.

Americans are exporting coffins to London and putting them in the market at prices little more than half of those charged by her Majesty's native undertakers. The Yankees began with sending washing-machines, apple-parers, and egg-beaters; then they shipped window-sashes, doors, panels and wainscots; within a year they have been exporting ready-made furniture of all kinds, from the commonest kitchen chair to the most elegant drawing-room table; and now they are following the h-less Briton even to his grave, and packing him under ground in brand-new American coffins with patented handles and reversible lids, vastly superior to the English-made article, and with prices to suit the times.

Readers and Contributors.

Declined: "The Last Soap," "Working to Win," "The Madman's Story," "Spoken," "Broken Life," "Walt Till Tomorrow," "Liking and Loving," "Suzette the Fair," "Old Abe, the Eagle," "Major Tom's Wager," "Truth in a Warren Box," "Accepted," "The Banquet of Song," "I Knew the Eye," "Miss or Mrs.," "A Speech of Copper," "The Ship on Shore," "Will Mernon's Pledge," "How Good She Was," "A Home Nest," "Walt So More."

J. H. H. MS. much too crude for publication. ZALDA. Valentine Day is Thursday, February 14th. OLD SNOOKS. The instrument you mean is the hygrometer. It gives the measure of moisture in the air.

H. ETRE. Sketch worthy of use; but we have such an over-supply of good things that we must decline it. Will retain MS. subject to order. No stamps for reply by mail.

SPENCER JOHN. A good box of water-colors can be had for one dollar. It is very easy to work in color pictures in books and papers. A good set of drawing cards will cost a dollar. Drawing-books (in sets) are twenty-five cents. They are excellent helps to a beginner.

MIRTY. No boy is too healthy. We presume you would be stronger if you could spend a year or two on a farm, with plenty of exercise, but not much real work. Hard work for boys is not the best thing for them. On the contrary, it often does great harm to bodily development.

F. D. L. See a published list of our publications, gives in occasional issues of the "Fireside Library," "Half-Dime Library," etc., etc. Also see advertisement of these and other series as given occasionally in the advertising columns of our paper. Books by all the authors named are included in the several series.

SALLY LURN. Valentines are not voted "vulgar" in the "best circles." On the contrary, the most expensive and lavish designs are quite "the thing" among the elite. No true gentleman would send a coarse valentine, even to one he disliked. You are at liberty to send or not to send, as you please. Letters as a misssive on the day. Indeed, the original valentine is the true one.

ANN T. LOPE. Bad breath is caused either by bad teeth or a bad stomach. Keep your teeth clean and remove or fill all that are decaying. If the stomach is in disorder correct that trouble and your breath will be sweet enough. "Bulldozing" is a Southern expression implying forcing one's way upon a person to submission. Write to Harper Brothers for a circular in regard to their new book on Photography. Munson's system is greatly in use. So is Pitman's.

ANDREW T. writes: "Will you tell me which of the Western States is called the 'Buckeye State,' and why? Is there any city in the United States called the City of Notions? I have read the name, but cannot find out to what place it refers. How is the word *eloge* pronounced and what does it mean? Ohio is the 'Buckeye State.' A tree called the 'Buckeye tree' prevails there—Boston is meant by the 'City of Notions.'—*Eloge* is pronounced *eloge*. It is an ornamental crystal or silver fruit stand."

OLIVE D. It is not correct, but a very great error, to address a wife by her husband's title. To write, *Mrs. Honorable John Jones*, or *Mrs. Doctor H. M. Smith*, is inadmissible. A true gentleman would write, *Mr. John Jones*, and *Mrs. H. M. Smith*. The eldest married lady of a family is simply *George Brown*; then comes *Mrs. Charles Brown*, *Mrs. John Brown*, etc.—You cannot use Mr., Mrs., or Miss, alone, in addressing a person by letter; always add the name.

JANETTE D. asks: "If I am a visitor at the house of a friend and she urges me to go to entertainments with her husband, which circumstances prevent her attending, should I accept of the invitation to see that her guests are well entertained and enjoy themselves, it is quite natural that she should arrange to have you taken by her husband to amusements, even though she cannot attend them, and there is no impropriety in your accepting such invitations."

BEATRICE BRONCH. Pure white Castile soap is the best to use upon the skin, unless your skin is rough or eruptive; then use carbolic soap. There is no hair that is not beautiful if kept healthy and glossy by frequent baths and daily brushing. The style of wearing the hair is going back to those arrangements of it that pile it entirely upon the top of the head. This is the best style for ladies, and they may be adopted; but ladies whose appearance this does not improve should retain some more becoming style of hair-dressing.

MAJOR V. asks: "When I go to the city, to visit, where I have many friends, both ladies and gentlemen, is it proper for me to invite them to call upon me at my hostess's house? And if so, how should the invitation be extended? Should I say, 'I would like to invite them to call upon you when you are visiting. Do this by inclosing your visiting-cards, in small envelopes, to your friends, and have your city address upon it, and the date of your stay, as: Miss MAGGIE VOORHIS, No. 11th to 23th.'"

LAZZIE AND LILLIE. It is perfectly proper for a young gentleman to give a party, and for young ladies to go to it. A gentleman may invite ladies to call upon his mother or sisters, and he may, with perfect propriety, take his friends to dine at home with his mother. Sachels, for ordinary use, may be made of bits of silk, ribbons, or linen, and filled with the powder. Violet and hawthorn are the most ladylike and refined perfumes. We will give you directions for making the elegant one you desire in our next issue.

J. W. C. Why leave a good trade which you have learned for a new one? Are not all trades, just now, overstocked and underpaid? As to travel, many accomplish it without money by shipping as "hands" on sailing ships, or as deck hands on the South America, to the whaling grounds, etc. The "least" cost to go "round the world" depends wholly on you—whether overland (by rail, stage, and steamer), or by sea (by steamer). It would be wise to go by sailing vessel to Canton, China; thence to Australia, by rail, and from thence to New York by rail. The telephone is now considerably used for private establishments; but it has not yet been utilized for police purposes.

H. AND S. "Propriety" would seem to demand that both should share in the expense of the party, but if they are evidently meant for only one of you the other should give way gracefully, and be pleased at the preference. A very few girls obtain such wages as the sisters named. The average pay of females at the counter is about seven dollars per week. The sisters' aunt probably advances their interests specially.

Send the valentine, of course, and if it speaks your real sentiments for the gentleman let him draw his own inferences. It is a very neat and proper mode of "making a proposal," and is a good reason for not keeping the appointment they should of course be explained, for it is regarded as a grave discourtesy to fail in an engagement if no proper apology is made.

A. D. C. It is an old saying that "thirteen" is a most unlucky number at a dinner-party, and that before the year is out, some one of any *thirteen* persons whether table or no, will die. Of course this is the silliest superstition. As to what is the correct number to which a dinner-party should be limited it is hard to decide. Some authorities say that "twelve" guests should be the limit, and some "nine." Certainly you should not have more than you can accommodate comfortably and entertain easily. A few people at each, and frequent parties is a practice I referable to that of inviting a crowd. Endeavor to have people of varied occupations and beliefs, to make the conversation gay, diverse and general. Have your dinner at the exact hour appointed, even if all your guests have not arrived. It is their duty to be on time. Full dress is expected at dinner parties. The seat at the right hand of the host and the seat at the right hand of the hostess are the seats of honor; the first should be given to the lady who is the guest of honor, and the second, or the one of highest rank; the second is given to the eldest or most distinguished gentleman. We wish you success.

ESTHER L. asks: "Why do gentlemen always admire full-fleshed ladies more than they do ladies who are thin? Don't you think the latter kind are apt to be more attractive in mind and character than the others?" A man looks for a lady as a woman. One who is what you style "full-fleshed" has the beauty of contour that is the first requisite of physical perfection; it argues good health, which usually comes vivacity, a genial spirit, readiness for work and play. Nor is it at all inconsistent with high mental excellence, as everybody knows. Full flesh is a matter of temperament largely, and as such impresses favorably even before acquaintance. Ladies thin in flesh and spare in body labor at a disadvantage, for they are not so firm and bony limbs, since the law of beauty, proportion and symmetry all pronounce against these attributes of woman's physical organization. Such women, with exquisite appreciation of beauty, overcome these defects by art that subordinates them; and, too, ladies conscious of their disadvantage generally strive to add to their mental and social worth, so that, in reality, they are attractive and charming in the highest sense.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

JANE SHORE.

1482.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

The king is gone! another fete!
When will these pleasures cease to whelm
The life that longs with death to mate—
The heart exiled from virtue's realm?
What! faded? No! my mirror tells
That I am fair as when that day,
For me rung out the wedding bells,
And cheap ide smiled to see me gay!

There was a time!—could I forget!
When I was happy by the sea!
Of one who somewhere lingers yet—
Who won my girlhood's guileless pride.
But now a wretched woman, I!
A loathsome yet a living thing,
Unto my God a living lie,
The puppet of a warlike king!

His wife? no! I am not his wife!
There is a name I durst not speak,
That which I am—will be thro' life!
Like heated iron, it sears my cheek.
The ooze of hell's remorseless stones
Falls on my brain with ceaseless drip;
Its icy terrors chill my heart nor brain,
And Judas-like makes every lip.

I am the king's! That word again
That haunts my pillow in the night!
It burns into my tortured brain,
Never to be exiled from my sight!
To me bow Edward's courtiers all,
A handsome, fickle, fawning band;
Eager to catch the words that fall
From lips, the falsest in the land!

He made me what I am! His word
Is law unto the East and West,
I'd rather be his rusted sword
Than bear this moment of disgrace.
Then—then, that English God! I would forget!
A sword hath neither heart nor brain;
A rusted sword is seldom whet,
Except by tears or crimson rain.

The nightly revel where I drink
And bow to the applause of men
Memory cannot drown! I think
Think madly of what might have been!
Oh! Edward, would we ne'er had met!
Oh! that these revels all were o'er!
For there is one who loves me yet—
Whom I will love for evermore!

My Arab Angel.

A Story of the Great Syrian Desert.

BY COLE DELLE SARA.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1868, found me standing, a free man, in the streets of Cairo—not Cairo, Illinois, that Arabian town, built by man's genius in about the worst swamp and on the most unlikely spot for a city—leaving the two rivers out of the question—that could be chosen; but Cairo, Egypt, the land of the pyramids, the kingdom of the khedive.

After our late "oppressantness" was over, like a great many others, used to years of military life, and not knowing what on earth to do to get a decent living in any civil occupation, I emigrated to Mexico and entered Maximilian's service, where, like the rest, I received more kicks than half-pence; the devotion of the emperor, abandoned by that prince of jugglers and charlatans, the Dutchman who dazzled France with the name of Napoleon, and humbugged all Europe into the belief that he was a statesman, and betrayed by the scurvy Mexican officers whom he trusted, set me once more free to sell my sword to the highest bidder. And as the Khedive of Egypt, just at that time, was making flattering offers to American officers to enter his service, I was induced to negotiate, and finally accepted a position in his forces.

After a fair trial, though, I became dissatisfied, and then had the luck to become involved, despite myself, in a quarrel with one of the civil officers of the khedive, a portly, arrogant Englishman, who had an idea that he knew about everything that was worth knowing, and that everybody ought to give way to him. Well, this gentleman took offense at some remarks of mine, forced me into a quarrel, and finally challenged me. In my hot-headed way, I accepted, and had the satisfaction of putting a bullet through the shoulder of my antagonist at the first fire. I could easily have put it through his head, but I didn't wish to kill the man, for I have been a dead-shot with the revolver ever since I was a soldier.

This little affair terminated my engagement with his lordship of Egypt, and so, as I said at the beginning, Christmas morning found me a free man, wondering in what direction I should next turn my footsteps.

A passer-by accosted me, an honest Hebrew merchant of my acquaintance—Moses Cohen by name.

Noticing that I was in plain clothes he inquired the reason.

I explained that I was no longer in the Egyptian service.

"And what are you going to do now?" he asked.

I replied that I had not yet decided.

"If you have a few hundred dollars that you care to invest in trade, I can put you in the way of making a good thing of it," with a knowing wink.

As I happened to be pretty well situated as far as money was concerned, I at once resolved to embrace the offer, particularly as I knew Cohen to be a shrewd, honest fellow, and so I told him that I would be pleased to join in the enterprise.

He gave me the details at once.

A caravan was about to start from Cairo and penetrate into the Syrian Desert, there to traffic with a certain tribe of Arabs for horses, those steeds of the desert, "shod with fire," and for which there is always such an excellent market.

I went with my honest Hebrew friend at once and was introduced to his partners in the enterprise.

Two days later we set out.

Counting our servants we mustered some fifteen strong, a force rather small to encounter the perils of the desert, I thought, and so expressed my opinion to my associates, but they assured me that there was no danger; that the wild tribes never molested the trading caravans, but I noticed, though, that my honest friends were careful to keep a vigilant watch after nightfall.

The danger that I dreaded came at last; we were some fifty miles from the town of Boxrah and had got fairly into the desert, and were within two days' journey of our objective point, when our camp was rudely awakened from its slumber one night by a fierce and sudden attack.

The Arabs—a horde of thieves of all the wild tribes—were upon us in full force.

Our sentries had slumbered upon their posts, and the first thing we knew of the attack was the wild yell of the fierce warriors right in our midst.

Sleeping as I constantly did with my hand on my revolver—but, I was ready for action in an instant. I let fly three shots and then a fierce Bedouin—a gray-bearded old chap, evidently a man of note—rode me down; I partly dodged the horse, saw the flash of the rider's steel as he whirled his sabre in the air, and understanding that my head was in danger, threw up my arm to ward off the blow.

My head escaped the full force of the shock, although getting a pretty smart tap, but my arm suffered, and, somehow, over I went in a swoon. I fancy that the horse pranced sideways, knocked me down and then trod on me; anyway, when I recovered I was sore in every limb.

Some time elapsed before I recovered my senses. When I came to it was broad daylight and I found myself reclining on a sumptuous couch in an apartment well furnished after the Eastern style; my arm had been placed in a sling, refreshments were on a low stool by my couch, and a few pages from my bedside, reclining on an ottoman, was as fair a dusky maid as ever my eyes had looked upon.

An Arab angel and no mistake!
Her hands were clasped together in her lap,
and with her large lustrous eyes she was gazing anxiously into my face.

No Arab tent was this sumptuous apartment, and I marveled much as to where I was.

"You are not dead, oh, Frank!" the girl cried, her voice low and musical.

"No, I believe not," I answered, "although at the first sight of you I was inclined to believe that I was and had come straight to Paradise."

She laughed; woman-like, she was not averse to flattery.

"Oh, no," she replied, "you are still on earth and in great danger. Do you know where you are?"

"I do not," I answered. "The Arabs are to blame for my wounded arm and my present disabled condition; but this is not an Arab tent."

"No; you are in Boxrah, in the house of Pasha Ali Jih."

I could not repress an exclamation of astonishment. When we had passed through Boxrah Cohen had told me that the pasha of the town was a most inveterate old scoundrel, and was suspected of being in league with the robbers of the desert.

"It is he that instigated the attack on the caravan, and he caused you to be brought here because he learned that you are a rich Frank, and he thinks that your friends will pay a large ransom for you."

I thought that it was best not to deny this pleasant fiction, for the old scoundrel of a pasha would not be apt to injure the goose that he believed would lay golden eggs for him, but I expressed my surprise that the pasha of a Turkish town should dare allow himself to be mixed up with a gang of robbers.

"Ah, but he is a cunning old wretch; he will not let any one know that you are here. He will send word to your friends that you are in the hands of the Arabs, and that he will negotiate with them to release you. He is a vile old wretch—my husband!"

I was rather astonished at this admission, made in perfect sincerity, but I held my peace.

"I am his wife!" she continued, her lip curling in scorn. "His tenth wife; he bought me of my father who was greedy enough to sell me to this old dog. But, I am a true child of the desert, and the pasha has never even dared to lay his hand upon me since I came here. He knows that I wear a dagger and that I am not afraid to use it. He trusts that in time I will be content, and so lets me do about as I like, but I will never be content with him; I want a Frank for a husband."

This was rather a strong declaration, and under the peculiar circumstances I felt a little embarrassed; but this child of nature never took the least notice of my hesitation, but proceeded coolly on in her speech:



An Arab Angel, and no mistake.

"Yes, I have made up my mind to marry a Frank—all Europeans are Franks to the wild children of the desert."

"Yes," with Miss Myra Wainwright. She is mistress here, now, is she not? Tell her that a person who knows how to tell fortunes wants to tell hers."

"I don't think she'll take up with such foolishness, old woman. Come in, but I shan't leave you a-standing here, when I don't know what you may be after. Tummies! Here, Tummies, you boy, stand 'ere and watch the old witch while I tell our young lady as she presents her compliments an' would request the pleasure of a sojournance with her."

The woman's keen black eyes flashed a look after the footman; then turning to the boy she remarked, with a grim smile:

"Ay, watch me close, little one; I might carry off one of these statues, or the newel-post, if you don't have a care!"

But, the footman did not have to leave Buttons long in charge; the new mistress was fitting down the stairs to sit a little while in the drawing-room before dinner.

The keen, searching eyes of the woman were fixed upon her as she floated down—small, airy, graceful. In the house Myra did not think it necessary to wear heavy mourning. She was expecting Mr. Garwell that evening, and she had made herself as pretty as possible, by dressing in white, with only black ribbons and jewelry to show that she was in mourning.

Her fair skin and flaxen hair were set off to their best advantage by this dress. She looked more like a child than a girl of twenty-two, as she came flitting down with a fairy motion, almost as if she had wings.

She stopped at the foot of the stair and looked inquiringly from the servant to the intruder. Not for an instant did the piercing eyes of the stranger leave her face.

"I beg your pardoning, miss," said the man, "she would come in. She says she wants to tell your fortune, miss, and I was coming to see you about it."

"You'd better take her down to Nora and Peggy. Bribes."

"No, my lady, it is you that I have come to tell a fine fortune to," spoke up the woman, advancing quite near to the young lady. "I'm a Cuban, lady, and I'm said to have a gift. I can tell many things in the future; I never fail."

Now Myra was not without a spice of superstition in her nature. She was secretly much troubled, also, with doubts whether the wonderful good fortune that had come to her would stay; she dwelt much, mentally, on her cousin's probable endeavors to break the will; she wanted to know, too, what her chances were with John Garwell; she was idle, and reflected that she might amuse herself until dinner with this old hag. Ethel was in her own room; she could have an interview with the fortune-teller without being ridiculed by any one; so she finally said:

"Well, come in here with me. Let me see, now, how much you know about the future," and, half-laughing, she led the way into a charming boudoir beyond the two drawing-rooms.

"I have been having my fortune told," said Myra, gaily, as she went in to dinner an hour later, and Ethel there alone, with the desert before her. "What! have you dined? That is lucky, for I have no appetite."

"I could not find you," apologized her cousin. "I was shut up in the boudoir with a Gipsy. These poor beggars take every way to get a dollar. She teased me so hard I had to humor her."

"I trust she predicted only fair weather," remarked Ethel, pleasantly.

She contrived to invest her nonsense with an air of truth, answered Myra. "I gave her a gold piece, my fortune was so bright. I'll take a bit of that iced soufflé, Ethel, please;" but when she had the soufflé before her Myra scarcely touched it; but waited for her coffee, which she took eagerly.

Ethel, grave and sad, as she always was since that loss which had come so suddenly upon her, noticed some subtle change in the expression of her companion's face.

"Myra is a giddy thing, for a girl of her age," she thought, seeing how the mere flattery of a

A MESSAGE.

BY E. Z. WAY.

You only half-promised me, brownie,
When on your tips trembled adieu,
To press from life's roses the honey,
So precious to him and to you.

Your maidenly coyness was pretty;
Your eyes they were tender and deep,
And that still gleamed the pity
That shadowed the secret you'd keep.

You said: "I'll be sisterly—loving,
And gracious as sister can prove—
I'll give him all trust worth bestowing—
But not that one proof of my love."

So, what was yours for the choosing
Of affection strong, lasting and true—
Too precious one day to be losing—
Is lost to him and to you!"

Is your life so filled up with blisses,
Dear brownie, that you can say nay
To passion you know such as his is—
To love no less can you say?

Oh, beautiful sophist! no longer
Clasp the dull chain round you cast!
And, proud in your grace, grow the stronger,
To own yourself conquered at last!

Madcap,

The Little Quakeress;

OR,

THE NAVAL CADET'S WOOLING.

A Romance of the Best Society of the Penn. City.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," "WAR OF HEARTS," "BRAVE BARBARA," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

FORTUNE-TELLING.

MEANTIME the beggar to whom he had given alms with a recommendation to her to seek some place of shelter immediately, seemed in no hurry to get out of the cold and coming darkness; she continued to sit where she was, pretty thoroughly protected by her thick shawl, drawn over head and ears, until the lamplighter set the gas to blazing in a lamp in front of her; then she arose and crawled up to the door, ringing the bell.

"Why don't you go to the basement door?" asked the servant, sharply, on seeing only an old beggar-woman before him.

"Because I have business with your new mistress," she answered, quite unmoved by his dignity.

The stranger closed the door and Myra seated herself in a blue-satin-and-gilt chair, in an indolent attitude.

"Describe my future husband, please," she said, perky.

"He is tall, slender, dark—brown hair, gray eyes—a little under thirty years old. He has a scar on his left hand made by the bite of a horse; he is fond of horses," the woman went on, slowly, holding the tiny hand of the girl, with the palm open to her inspection.

"You have seen him!" cried Myra, blushing brightly.

"Yes," said the stranger, now holding Myra's hand firmly in her strong clasp. "I have seen John Garwell. I did not come here to practice upon you the trickeries of a Gipsy. I came to you, Myra Wainwright, because I am the possessor of a secret which you would almost give this hand to know. Can any one hear us?" looking about her.

"No, I think not. My cousin is up-stairs—the servants at their dinner. We can speak low," answered Myra, speaking eagerly.

With natural quickness she had connected the assertion of the woman that she was a Cuban with some secret which should bear upon the mystery of Ethel's birth. What could this dark, poor-looking creature tell her! Was she in danger of losing all? Was she to be confirmed in her possessions? Cool as the young lady was by habit, she felt her color come and go—her heart throbbed loudly against her side.

"I can assure you that which you have already, and I can fix your title to money and estates in Cuba which will more than double your present wealth."

"How?" asked Myra, under her breath.

"That is my secret. It is a secret for which you will have to pay me well—well, liberally, extravagantly! But then you will be able to pay me well. All I ask is a thousand dollars now, and one-tenth—reflect, what a trifle, one-tenth!—of the property which I shall make it in your power to claim."

"That might prove to be a large sum!"

"Ay, but your portion will be nine times larger. Let me tell you first, Myra Wainwright, that I have come to you first, for a reason of my own; but that, if I am dissatisfied with you or your liberality, there remains your cousin Ethel, with whom I can treat."

"But you cannot give her what is mine?"

"Ay, is it yours? Do no doubts trouble you? Are there none to labor in your cousin's cause?"

"I am not gainsaying you," asserted Myra, beginning to tremble; "I am willing to accept your terms, as soon as you prove to me your right to make them."

The woman again glanced about the room, went to the two doors—each of which closed behind soft blue draperies so as to appear part of the wall—dropped off her ugly shawl and stood before the heiress looking quite another

pretended fortune-teller could bring such a rich color to the fair cheek and such a smile about the pink mouth, and glitter to the large blue eyes that almost seemed to wish to avoid her own because they knew they were too bright.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY LATE PATRONESS.

THAT first interview of Myra with the Cuban woman was not the last. Several more followed, not at the house, however; and then the Cuban left Philadelphia to return to her native island. Myra had drawn so liberally of money at the bank that every one wondered what she could do with it.

But the woman, who took two thousand dollars in gold back to Cuba, could have answered that question better than any one else.

A new spirit pervaded the home of the Wainwrights. Myra developed a new character so rapidly that even those who suspected her latent qualities were astonished.

The meek, quiet, deprecating little creature became haughty and insolent. The old servants, who had been, some of them, really to the family, were given notice to leave. Others filled their places. Whereas, in the past, one waiting-maid had sufficed both girls, Myra now had a maid exclusively to attend upon her; and a hard time the girl had of it trying to please a mistress as capricious as she was unfeeling.

But this servant, for some reason, chose to remain with her. She was a young person who had presented herself in answer to an advertisement; a Frenchwoman, by birth, she was represented to be, in the reference which she brought, but speaking English quite well; bright and pleasant in her manners, neat in her dress, with a really pretty face laughing out from under her white cap. She was so tasteful in the arrangement of her young lady's hair, and could tell so much better than mademoiselle herself what became her most—giving a richness and tone to the flaxen hair and small features which they never before possessed—that Myra was anxious to keep her, while, at the same time, she was glad to see the girl victim of numberless petty persecutions.

Though in mourning, and paying outward deference to her cousin's memory, Myra indulged in every pleasure allowable, and waited with burning impatience for the first six months of mourning to pass, so that she might be free to launch out into the full tide of gay society.

Every day her manner toward her cousin grew more indifferent and more patronizing. Ethel felt that insolent manner most keenly. She had lost father, lover, fortune, and now she had to bear this assumption of superiority on the part of this girl whom she had loved and cherished as a sister when Myra was penniless and friendless.

Ethel tried bravely to endure this daily torture, as she bore her other sufferings, silently and sadly.

But she felt a burning indignation which almost prompted her to leave the house forever when Myra, between Christmas and New Year's, changed the furniture of the mansion as she had changed the servants. The massive, but elegant and appropriate furniture, chosen by her uncle's taste, was sent to the auction-rooms, and in its place, came sumptuous things, as if Myra had been the "Queen of France," for whom nothing was too luxurious.

Yet no one had the power to interfere.

The will had been admitted to probate—Ethel not contesting—and Myra being of age, there was no one with the right to check her extravagance. She acted as if the five hundred thousand dollars of her uncle's estate were five millions. No one, save herself, knew what the Cuban had revealed to her; or some clever might have been had to her senseless expenditure. Ethel looked on in indignation and dismay.

Everything prospered with little Myra. Everything which went to make up the sum of Ethel's trouble went to her aggrandizement. Yes! she had even won John Garwell to be her lover, before the first day of the New Year!

Circumstance, that "unspiritual God," had favored her in that desire of her heart, as in everything else.

For a terrible misfortune had overtaken that other house in Walnut street, of whose inmates we know something.

A few days before Christmas Coralie Clyde had kissed her aunt a laughing good-bye for an hour, having been recommended to cease fumbling over the lace ruchings of her wedding-dress and to run out for a breath of air and a brisk walk.

Aunt Priscilla had seen with regret—and perhaps a tinge of remorse—that the smooth cheeks of her niece were growing less round and far more white, as the early day set for her marriage with the man of their choice approached.

The anxious aunt had sought to quiet her own conscience by a lavish expenditure of money on the coming event. Coralie had every pretty article purchased for her which she could be coaxed to say she admired. The old ladies had new dove-colored satins, of so solid a texture that they would "stand alone," in preparation, to be worn at the ceremony. There was a diadem of pearls in course of construction at Bailey's, which was to be worn on those wayward, dancing curls along with the bridal veil, and in union with the lovely necklace which they had previously given her. Nothing was spared that would please their darling. Many gay things, not approved by the Friends, found their way into the sober, highly respectable dwelling.

But Coralie smiled less day by day; and she shrank from the visits of the bridegroom-elect in a strange way which kept her aunts more uneasy than they cared to confess.

And on this cold and blustering December day, when, seeing how white and still she was, they advised a brisk walk, she went very unwillingly to take it; and either some fearful accident happened to her or she forgot to come back.

Most people considered it a case of abduction or murder. She was almost a child in years, innocent, and perilously beautiful. Some wretch or wretches must have dogged her steps and snatched her ruthlessly away from her life of joy and beauty—from loving arms and worshipping lover—from the bridal jewels and the bridal feast.

The whole city was startled.

The Misses Featherlight, mercifully for them, did not believe in their secret thoughts that Coralie had been abducted; but they allowed others to think they did.

Almost as dreadful, it seemed to them, was the thing they suspected—that she had run away to be married to that penniless and nameless youth to whom she had avowed she was "engaged." There was in such a course—they thought, in their pride—a more bitter disgrace than to meet her fate at the hands of ruffians.

Coverly they employed a detective, who ascertained for them that Bertram Leigh, cadet, had actually sailed in the Mohawk, as he had said he should do—that the ship was still far south on her coasting expedition—that young Leigh was still on board of her—had not left her except with others for a night or a day at some port—that, most certainly, Coralie had not gone to him.

After that, a horrible fear that something murderous had happened to the child, made the aunts wretched. The more so as time wore on, and they gained no tidings.

Many a time that winter did those poor old ladies go to view the dead and swollen body of some woman "found drowned"—some young creature who might lately have been as pretty and as innocent as Coralie. Their sorrow would have been most pitiful had they not brought it on their own heads by the effort they had made to sacrifice the girl on the wide altar of Mammon and Pride.

One man in the great city, when he read in his morning paper, the first day after, of the mysterious disappearance, firmly believed that he had seen the missing girl and followed her some distance on her way. This was Webster Evelyn, who had noticed the strange expression in the eyes of a young girl, and had followed her to the bridge.

"Fool that I was!" he said to himself, with a

sinking of the heart, "to be duped into letting her go! It was all a ruse on her part, taking the car. Doubtless she returned to the river as soon as she could, unobserved, and threw herself in! I saw self-murder in her white face. I almost feel as if her death lays at my door. Evelyn did, indeed, feel terribly agitated in recalling that perhaps if he had persisted in watching her, he might have saved a human life. But, it would do no good to brood over the unrecalled. He was to start at noon, on a steamer bound for Havana, and on which his passage was already taken, and his curious errand—like that of some medieval knight—of righting the wrongs of his fair lady.

Surely, his impulse and his purpose were as pure and gallant as those of any planned knight who ever fought in a maiden's cause. Webster Evelyn might never have taken the fancy of a romantic girl, like one of those graceful heroes of the tournament, as he stepped out of Mr. Dobell's office, buttoning about his tall figure his frayed overcoat; but at heart he was the noblest of noble cavaliers.

He set out on his search with absolutely no clew to what he sought, except the fact that Cyrill Wainwright had married a Cuban lady, in such a year; and had returned on such an other year, saying that he was a widower, and bringing with him a little girl of two years, who, he said, was his daughter, and always treated as such until the day of his death; but whom, in his will, he declared not to be his daughter, and so had disinherited her.

It had seemed strange to Mr. Dobell, when he first set out to make inquiries about Mr. Wainwright's early life, that in reality his most intimate friends knew so little on the subject. Everything had been taken for granted.

Cyrill Wainwright had been an only child; his father had been a highly-respected merchant of the city, and had sent his son, at the age of twenty-three, down to Cuba, to attend to some sugar interests which he had there.

Cyrill's nearest friends could not recall, when questioned, that his father had died while the son was in Cuba; that Cyrill was said to have married the daughter of a wealthy planter; that he had been called home on the death of his father, and had returned, in deep distress, having also lost his wife, not a month before, and that he brought with him his child, little Ethel; and had, from that time on, lived quietly in his Philadelphia home, devoted to his daughter, and the memory of his wife who had died in her youth, and for whose sake he never again married. That when his brother failed in business, and afterward died, he invited his brother's daughter, Myra, to share his home, and be a companion for Ethel.

It was a suspicious point that, on questioning Ethel, she could not recall her mother's family name, and that there was no record of it among Mr. Wainwright's papers.

Mr. Dobell had been forced to the conclusion that Ethel's appearance on the stage was due to some love-affair, in which the young merchant had become entangled with some one below him in the social scale; that he might, indeed, have even misrepresented the real character of his alliance in order to bring home this child as his own; but, why, in that case he should have brought her to the stage, and as his daughter and heiress, puzzled the lawyer.

Of course, he had not betrayed his suspicions to Ethel.

It was this fact that Mr. Wainwright had always treated the girl as his daughter and legal heir, which fastened itself in Evelyn's mind.

He loved that unhappy, disinherited young lady. For the love he bore her, in silence and without return, he had resolved to do all that a sharp, patient lawyer could do, to ascertain what her position really was, and to look for some good reason for an attempt to break the will and restore to her what she had lost.

And so he sailed for Cuba without even the encouragement of feeling that she wished any one to interfere.

When the New Year came in, Evelyn was in Cuba, Coralie Clyde was as completely lost as if she had soared to the sky, and John Garwell, in the desperate necessities of his situation, was devoting himself to a woman whom he despised far more than he loved—Myra Wainwright. Coralie's flight had placed him in an awkward and uneasy plight. The creditors whom he had silenced with fair promises came about him again like a swarm of wasps. His father, to whom some of them had appealed, was very angry with him; would not advance ten dollars beyond the sum necessary for his daily wants, and even threatened to turn him out of his house. In this desperate plight he naturally recalled the flattering preference of Miss Myra for himself.

He had fancied sweet little Coralie well enough to be satisfied to compel her to become his wife; but the vain, selfish Myra he had studied and fathomed only to despise. However—something had to be done! Behold him, on New Year's evening at her feet!

Scarcely two weeks since Coralie's disappearance, yet he was already the suitor of another and wealthier lady!

That first day of the New Year had been a long, miserable day to Ethel. As the day drew first saw her standing by the window in the first agony of her father's illness, so she stood now, for hours—a little back from the view of the hundreds of "callers" who thronged that fashionable street—staring, with strange, bright, feverish eyes at the glittering equipages rocking by. This gay, outside world so so changed to her from what it had been, a year ago!

She knew that John Garwell came often to see Myra. She now knew him as he was—an unprincipled man, but it is almost as hard to root out a dead love as a living one—like the traitor from her warm, tender, human heart gave her many a fierce pang, notwithstanding her respect for him was dead.

Very sadly and wisely she looked on, wondering at Myra more even than at him, for she knew that her cousin was not deceived in his character or motives. She did not know that Myra long had loved him, with a passionate, reckless devotion which some persons can give to a single object, while there are hard and selfish to all the rest of the world.

John Garwell had opened the one sweet fountain in Myra's spirit; for him it shone clear and full.

The brief wintry afternoon of New Year's day stole swiftly on. The Wainwrights, owing to their mourning, did not receive.

A servant came to call Miss Ethel to the five o'clock dinner. She was cold and pale, and had eaten nothing since breakfast; but she felt as if the sight of the table, with Myra at its head, would be hateful to her; so she lingered a few minutes where she was; then went slowly down the broad stairs; but, when she reached the main hall it required more firmness than she had left to keep on to the dining-room.

She turned and entered the little boudoir dark of the double drawing-rooms. It was back there, and peaceful. The windows of the boudoir faced the west. Through the parted long silken curtains came the light of a just-risen full moon, whose silver radiance struggled coldly with the warm flash of sunset. Ethel, choking down her tears—lonely, desolate, sick of life—slipped in here, went to one of the windows, dropped the heavy curtains behind her, and stood there a long, long time, in a dream-world illuminated by moonlight—until once sweet as June, but ghastly and frozen now, like the poor rose-bushes which rattled their icy branches against the pane.

"Alone! alone! Oh, I wish I were dead!" whispered her dry lips, as she lifted her beautiful, pallid face—like marble in that silver light—to the far-off heaven.

Poor Ethel! she knew nothing of the one brave, earnest heart which loved her with true, manly love—the love that protects, that reveres, that works for its idol. She never gave a thought to the poor young lawyer who was serving her, or trying to serve her, with his best effort.

Absorbed in her own intense emotions, she did not hear or see the entrance of two people into the moonlit boudoir.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 412.)

UNCLE REMUS'S CORN-SHUCKING SONG.

"OH! GO 'WAY, SINDY ANN!"

BY J. C. HARRIS.

Oh, de fus' news you know de day'll be a-breakin' (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
An' de fier be a-burnin' an' de ash-cake a-bakin', (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
An' de ben'll be a-bollerin' an' de boss'll be a-wakin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Better git up, nigger, an' give yo' self a-shakin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

Oh, honey! w'en you see dem ripe stars a-fallin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Oh, honey! w'en you hear de rain-crow-a-callin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Oh, honey! w'en you hear dem little pigs a-rootin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Den de daytine's a-comin', a-creepin' an' a-drawin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

CHORUS.

Fer de los' ell-an'-yard iz a-huntin' for de mornin', (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
An' she'll fetch up widus' to we ever git dis corn in— (Oh, go 'way, Sindy Ann!)

Oh, honey! w'en you hear dat tin horn a-tootin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Oh, honey! w'en you hear de squint-owl a-croakin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Oh, honey! w'en you hear dem little pigs a-rootin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Right den she's a-comin', a-skipkin' an' a-scootin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

Oh, honey! w'en you hear dat roan mule whicker— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
W'en you see Mister Moon turnin' pale an' gettin' sicker— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Den she's time fer to handle dat corn a little quicker— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)

Er you wantin' git a small uv ole Master's jug er lickin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
You niggers ober dar! You better stop your dan-cin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)

No use fer to come a-dancin' an' a-dingin' in— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
No use fer to come a-fingin' uv yo' 'can'ta' in— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Kaze dey ain't no time for yo' puttin' on yo' prancin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

Mister Rabbit see de fox an' he sass um an' he jaws um— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Mister Fox ketch de rabbit, an' he scratch um an' he claws um— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
An' he 'tar off de hide, an' he chaws um an' he gnaws um— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)

Same like gal chawin' sweet gum an' rozzum— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Oh, work on, boys! give dese shucks a mighty ring in— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)

'Fore de boss come aroun' a-dancin' an' a-dingin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Git up an' move aroun'! set dem big han's ter swingin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Up'n down de Bang!)
Git up'n shout loud! let de white folks hear you singin'— (Hey O! Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

The Poisoned Apple.

BY W. J. HAMILTON.

THE feast was high in Camelot, and the knights of King Arthur, around that magical board which the skill of Merlin reared, drank to the health of Arthur and the peerless Queen Guinevere.

The stainless king, as he looked down the line of noble faces, felt that his work had been well done. In all that fair assembly there was not one knight who had not earned his place by deeds of prowess with lance, sword, mace or battle-axe. There Sir Lancelot de Lac, the knight so matchless in arms, who had but one stain upon his honor; Gawaine, ready of wit, brave as a lion, second only to Lancelot and the king; Tristram, whose mournful eyes seemed looking ever across the narrow seas to Cornwall's coast, where dwelt Isold the Fair; Pellinore, Geraint, and many more, the least the peer of kings and princes of any other land.

On the right hand of the queen sat a guest from Scotland, a man reputed valiant as the best, who had come on a strange errand. Men said that, leagued with Modred, the evil brother of King Arthur, he sought to trail the fame of Guinevere in the dust, and from time to time her glorious eyes fell on him with a strange, intent look, as if she would have read his very soul.

"I make you welcome, Sir Hector," she said, at last. "Men speak well of thy valor, and ere you turn again to the hills of Scotland, I fain would see splintering of lances between thee and our valiant knights, and we have many." "I will meet them as I may, fair queen," he said; "the best can do no more."

The queen looked down the board, and saw near her hands, upon a silver dish, a heap of golden apples. Selecting one, as a mark of favor, she laid it in the hand of Sir Hector. "Thou hast been taught to love the simple fruit of the earth," she said. "Take this from my hand, fair knight."

The rugged Scotchman looked at the fruit with a strange gaze, and to the queen he said, "The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as our legends say," he answered. "With this our first mother tempted Adam; and certes, Eve was not fairer than thou, my queen."

The feast went on, and the knight ate the apple given him by the queen. All at once there came a horrible gurgling cry, and Sir Hector was seen upon his feet, clutching at his throat, as if choking.

"Poisoned!" he cried. "My death lie heavy on you, traitress; by your hand I die."

"No, no!" cried Guinevere. "As I live by bread I knew not of this."

"False!" cried the dying knight. "I call all here to witness, that by the hand of Queen Guinevere I am foully slain!"

The words had scarcely passed his lips when, with a horrible convulsion, he fell upon his face. Many ran to him, but when his face was turned to the light they saw that all was over. Sir Hector was dead.

"False queen!" cried Modred, ever ready to do any evil; "this good knight spoke the truth, for many here saw you place the apple in his hand."

"I did, I did!" was the reply; "but God is my judge that I knew nothing of it."

At this moment the clash of arms was heard, and a knight of noble presence, preceded by a herald, strode into the hall. All recognized the blazon which he bore, the mantain cat leaping on his prey, and knew that he was one of the house of Sir Hector. As he threw up his visor he revealed a haughty face, very like that of the man who lay dead beside the great table. He was about to speak, when his eyes rested upon that dead man, which, with its protruding tongue and staring eyes, seemed to mock him.

"I come in good time, oh my brother," he cried, falling on his knees beside the body. "I was warned that evil would come to us here. Now list thou here, cold and dead; but at least I may avenge thee."

He bounded to his feet with an ominous clash of arms, and turned to King Arthur, stretching out his mailed and sinewy arm.

"Hear, oh king!" he cried; "hear, ye knights of Arthur's court, the hour when my brother Hector, trusting to your honor, set foot on this unhallowed floor. My brother's blood cries for justice, and justice I will have, if I take it by the strong hand."

"Justice shalt thou have, Sir Evan," replied the king, "even though the proof should strike

down one dearer to me than life itself. Break up the banquet! To the hall of judgment!"

"Lay hands upon her first," said Modred, sternly. "I accuse her, that murderess, Queen Guinevere, with the death of this good knight, Sir Hector of Liddesdale."

"Let no man accuse her save myself," shouted Sir Evan, who had been speaking in a hurried tone to Modred. "This noble prince will bear me witness, and I am ready to do battle to the death with any man, your best and bravest, who dares say that she hath not slain my brother by poison."

"To the judgment-hall!" repeated Arthur, proudly. "If this be proved, I have no queen, and she is nothing more to me than any common man's lecher. Cough I say, to judgment!"

They passed through the lofty halls of the castle, followed by a dozen men-at-arms who led among them the accused. Her face was ghastly pale, for, innocent or guilty, she saw but too well that it would be hard to prove that she had not slain the knight. In the great judgment-hall sat the twelve lawgivers, and in the center rose the great throne upon which King Arthur sat when giving judgment. The face of the noble king was set in stern resolve as he looked on the dais and seated himself in the place of honor.

"Place the accused at the bar!" he said, and the shrinking queen, with her golden hair falling about her in a rippling flow, and her pale face fast down, was led forward.

"Who to accuse this woman?" demanded King Arthur. "Let him speak."

Sir Evan advanced. "I, Evan of Liddesdale, prince in my own realm, do avow on my knightly honor that Queen Guinevere hath with my brother by poison. And this I will uphold, with lance, mace, or dagger, under knightly shield, against any man who dares to say that she is innocent, even the king himself."

"Sir Evan," was the proud reply. "I sit here as a judge, not to do battle for those accused of foul crimes. Doubtless, if she is innocent, God will raise her up a champion; if guilty, let her bear the blame and punishment."

"Thus I accuse her, oh king," cried Evan of Liddesdale, "and I do battle for those accused of foul crimes. Doubtless, if she is innocent, God will raise her up a champion; if guilty, let her bear the blame and punishment."

"Touch it not, Sir Lancelot. I demand from the king that he restore to me the sword which he gave me, that I may take up the sword for a foul murderer."

"Sir Lancelot had already taken a step to raise the glove, when Modred spoke: "Touch it not, Sir Lancelot. I demand from the king that he restore to me the sword which he gave me, that I may take up the sword for a foul murderer."

"It is just," said the king, coldly. "Go, Sir Lancelot, you may not be her champion."

Lancelot looked withal at the king, and read in his eyes the expression of a cry of pain, and fled from the judgment-hall, like one demented.

"See, see!" cried Modred. "Thus the guilty fly before their accusers."

"Be silent, my brother," commanded the king. "Speak, Guinevere; what say you to the charge?"

"I am innocent, oh king," she cried. "I had no hand in the death of this knight."

The king inclined his head slowly, and ordered the sword to be restored to the queen. If a champion appears in your behalf, well; if not, when the sun goes down, the hand of the executioner shall light the pile. God aid you, and give you a champion!"

The morning came, bright and fair, and in the open plain outside the walls of Camelot, where the jousts were held, the fated queen stood bound to the stake. All about her, in a great circle, held back by the lists, was a vast multitude, waiting for the end.

The king, covered from head to foot, even to his face, sat upon his throne at one side of the lists. At the upper end Sir Evan had set up his shield before his tent, waiting for the man who dared to strike it in defense of Guinevere, while Sir Hector, his tent, armed at all points, ready to do battle.

The day wore on, the sun passed meridian, and yet no man had dared to lift the hand in the cause of the accused. Nearly all believed her guilty, some doubted only, and not one had suffered in her innocence to take up arms in her behalf, since Lancelot had been driven away.

Guinevere, in agony, looked at the declining sun. Guilty or innocent, she had hoped that the sweet face, and the kindness she had shown to many, would have earned her one friend. But at this time, not one of the family of Lancelot or her own brothers, were in or near Camelot, and so strong was the suspicion that she had not one friend.

It was growing late, and as the sun slanted from the sky a murmur of expectation was heard, and the multitude swayed to and fro as if moved by a mighty wind.

"Not one friend, not one!" sadly sighed the queen. Lancelot, Lancelot, the only one who would have fought in my behalf, right or wrong, has been driven from me. And Arthur, my king, sits there with covered face and will see me die."

At this moment, while the last rays of the evening sun glinted on the colored shield of Sir Evan, there was a sudden commotion at the entrance to the lists, and a man clothed from head to foot in linked mail, bearing a shield without lance or device of any kind, rode boldly in. Once he made the circuit of the lists, and passed before the captive queen.

"Speak, Guinevere," he said, in a voice which sounded strange and hollow behind his barred visor. "Speak, and truly, fair queen. In the name of God, are you guilty or innocent of this crime?"

"Fair knight," replied the sad queen, "I swear to you by my queenly honor, by my mother's spirit, by everything I hold holy and pure, that I am stainless in this crime which is imputed to me!"

"Remember that he who draws sword for thee must die if he fail," he added. "Do me no wrong, fair queen."

"If you fight this battle, Sir Knight," she answered, "do it boldly, for I am as innocent as your own mother of this crime."

The stranger knight sprang from the saddle, pressed his lips to the hand of the queen, and sprung again to his steed. Riding close to the shield of Sir Evan he struck it with the truncheon of his lance until it rung again, and the bold Scotchman sprang to the ground.

"Ha!" he cried. "Wilt do battle for this fair devil, Sir Knight?"

"Ay," was the response, "to the death, an you will."

The trumpets sounded, and Sir Evan sprang armed into the saddle, while the unknown retreated to his place in the lists and couched his lance, which he had taken from a squire who also wore his visor down.

"God defend the right!" cried the grand marshal, and the trumpets were ordered, and their steeds to the shock. Hard was the stroke the Scottish knight gave the stranger. Back he went until he almost lay along the horse's back, but still he kept his seat, and swept on, but the point of his lance, as the Scotch knight's, he got, fairly lifted him from the saddle, and sent him flying through the air with tremendous force, and he rolled over and over on the ground with a tremendous crash. Down sprang the stranger knight, dagger in hand, and set his foot upon the breast of the prostrate knight, while the air was rent by the acclamations of the multitude.

"Yield or you die!" cried the victor.

There was no reply; Sir Evan lay silent on the seat, and the king drew his sword down.

"Have I conquered?" demanded the victor, turning to the judges.

"Ay!" was the response. "Guinevere, Queen of Britain, is free from stain."

They hurried in to release her, and making a

haughty gesture to them to stand aside, she approached her champion.

"Sir Knight," she said, "faithful among the faithful, I must see thy face."

The stranger threw off his helmet clasps, and, without raising his visor, hurled the helmet suddenly aside. Guinevere gave a cry of joy, and sprang into his waiting arms, for in her champion she saw her husband, Arthur, the stainless king. And the man who had taken his place, hurling off his drapery, revealed the face of Galahad. But, the victory was won, and at the feet of the king lay the form of Evan, of Liddesdale, cold and dead.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

BY OCTOBER JAMES.

Mount not Pegasus, humble youth of rhyme, Without expecting many a goodly fall! The fairest visions of thy summer-simulacra May prove like flower leaves, withered after all.

The brightest hues e'er donned by heather bells, The richest perfumes of the lovely rose, Will lose their beauty and their fragrant bells, If we their petals to the sun expose.

When safely seated on thy gallant steed, With firm hand holding at the bridle reins, Some pestering critter, with an inky red, Unseats and leaves you in the dust again!

Silver Star, THE BOY KNIGHT;

OR, The Mystery of Osman, the Outlaw.

A PRAIRIE ROMANCE.

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER XV.

MOMENTS OF TERROR. "Tori!" was the ejaculation of the red-skin, as he glided into the room and shot his black, snaky eyes about, permitting them to rest upon the white, terrified face of the fair Helice.

"Red-skin!" exclaimed Sparrowhawk, "why do you intrude here in the Spirit Swamp?" "Come git scalp—purt squaws—heap lubly," was the answer given in English, such as it was.

The eyes of Sparrowhawk fairly blazed. The force of a demon and the desperation of a madman became set upon his handsome, manly face. The very muscles of his face and neck seemed to contract into hard knots, while his whole person seemed surrounded with a nimbus of superhuman power.

"Red-skin, you and I are not enemies—we are strangers," he said, in measured accents; "but come another step and you shall die."

The savage laid his hand upon his tomahawk, and feeling secure in the presence of his friends, he straightened himself up to his full height and took a short step forward.

The next instant he fell dead—shot through the brain. Without rose a fierce, savage yell, but before another Blackfoot could enter, Silver Star sprang forward and slammed the door shut and bolted it.

Again the savages tore the night with their yells, and the blows of tomahawks fell thick and fast upon the door—a frail barricade to long resist such an assault.

Sparrowhawk saw the door must soon yield. In silent terror, and with a burning humiliation, he turned to Silver Star. He glanced at the fearless young scout, then at Helice and Elwe. The light in his eye had changed. His spirit was unbending.

"Thick and rattling fell the blows upon the door—blows that seemed to awaken echoes in the chambers of Sparrowhawk's soul."

"Silver Star," the young recluse finally said, "if you can, I beg you to forgive me. I have been a fool, and I have done you wrong."

"I hold no malice—no ill-will toward you, Sparrowhawk," was the truly noble reply. "The two clasped hands were friends."

A cry of joy burst from the lips of the maidens. Helice, upon Elwe go into the back room—hide in the cellar," said Sparrowhawk; then turning to the young scout, continued: "Silver Star, do you think there is any hope?"

"God only knows; but we cannot die in a better cause than in defending those innocent girls."

"Never, Silver Star, never—Ah! the door is yielding! look out!"

Sparrowhawk blew out the light as the door burst in. Darkness filled the room and concealed the faces of the girls, but they could see the shadowy forms of the savages against the moonlight outside.

The revolver that Sparrowhawk would have raised against Silver Star now opened its deadly fire upon the yelling fiends. Side by side the two, Sparrowhawk and Silver Star, stood dealing death to the advancing foe. Over the Spirit Swamp, the first time, perhaps, since creation's morn, rung the din of conflict.

But such an uneven contest was not to last long. The revolvers of the defenders would soon be empty.

Sparrowhawk finally seized his companion by the arm, and drawing him into the back room, closed and barred the partition door.

The savages, a dozen strong, poured into the front room.

"While they are pounding away at this door, we must try and escape," said Sparrowhawk; "come, Silver Star, let us join the girls in the cellar."

The two descended the ladder into the cellar, where the girls stood trembling with terror. "Now let us go outside and make a run for the canoes."

They ascended the steps to the outside entrance, and stood in the shadow of the building. The savages were now inside, yelling like fiends, and thundering about in the darkness in search of the whites.

For a moment our friends stood by the cabin, conversing in hurried whispers; but, presently, they broke and ran toward the landing, Sparrowhawk taking the lead and the young scout bringing up behind.

A savage left on guard at the landing gave the alarm. Sparrowhawk shot him dead.

Those in the cabin heard the pistol-shot, and at once came pouring from the house and yelling toward the landing. Helice and Elwe sprang into the first canoe they came to. Sparrowhawk gave the boat a shove and sent it gliding across the open water into the reeds. Then he and Silver Star leaped into another boat and followed on rapidly after the maidens, and in a moment they, too, were concealed from view of the red-skins in that wilderness of reeds.

The crash of rifles and the rattle of bullets, like hail, among the reeds followed in the distance. "Thank God, we have escaped with our lives, if nothing else," said Sparrowhawk, dropping his paddle and inserting cartridges into his revolver.

"Yes, Sparrowhawk, but we are not out of danger yet," replied the Boy Knight. "No; and so let us hurry forward and overtake the girls. We can then take them into our canoe and endeavor to elude the savages before we leave the swamp."

Sparrowhawk, taking up the paddle and driving the canoe into the narrow passage through the reeds, Helice and Elwe followed the path familiar to himself and his sister, supposing the girls would follow that course to the river. They moved along as fast as two paddles would carry them, and to hearing of the maidens when half the distance to the river was made.

"It's singular we don't overtake them," said Silver Star; "we surely haven't passed them."

"No;

THAT EARLY MUSTACHE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

What tongue can tell the joys that fill
The heart of young man Jack
When heath his nose the first fuzz shows
Foretelling a mustache!

He's prouder than the richest man
Could be with heaps of cash
Over that brown first fuzz of down—
That ghost of a mustache.

Some day the girls will praise its curls.
Oh, frost, be not too rash,
And touch one hair of promise there
And spoil that dear mustache!

A looking-glass he cannot pass,
He might and dark he looks to mark
The growth of that mustache.

How very slow it seems to grow!
And should you care to grow,
Or speak of it with touch of wit,
He'll fight for that mustache.

Ask if that's dirt, and he'll feel hurt,
And both his eyes will flash;
The yield, indeed, shows but scant seed
Planted for that mustache.

He drinks cold tea for fear that he
Might scald and bring to smash
That little crop upon his lip
He calls "his dear mustache."

He longs to see the time when he
Can twist it in a lash
And lay it there across his ear—
The prized, loved mustache.

It never lacks for brush and wax,
For this he spends some cash.
But horrors, oh, how slow it grows!
Waxes that dear mustache!

Pride of his heart! The barber's art
Is now invoked by Dash
To cultivate and irrigate
That fungus-like mustache.

The barber smiles and puts on oils—
Dyes warranted to make the snow fall
And with many an ointment doth anoint
That delicate mustache.

And though this youth, in very truth,
Is late from eating hash,
'Tis plain to see how much he
Is wrapped up in that mustache!

Post and Plain;

OR,

Rifle and Revolver in the Buffalo Range.

BY LAUNCE POYNTEZ.

II.

HOW TO SHOOT A PISTOL.

WHEN we stepped outside on the parade-ground of the fort, the wind was blowing from a different quarter. The heavy gray clouds were scudding across the sky, low down, and the western horizon showed some patches of blue.

"We shall have a regular nipper to-morrow," announced Bullard. "A north-south wind, and the plains is no joke, I tell you. The thermometer will be down to ten below zero, at least. Later in the season it will sink to forty."

"And how do you manage to keep warm?" asked Moore.

"Oh, it never blows hard when we're down at forty. I'd sooner have a still day with ten degrees than a north-west with ten. We'll not borrow trouble if we can help it."

We passed across the parade-ground, which was now dotted with figures. The men were coming out of their quarters and beginning to snowball each other, while officers were strolling from one house to another. We noticed that in the garrison every one wore some sort of uniform, and that the blue great-coats were universal.

We made our way toward the stables, along a path which had already been made by the garrison snow-plows. On the way we passed several officers, and in each case we had to stop and be introduced all round, a ceremony conducted with a great deal of bowing and hat-lifting, for officers of the army are above all things polite. Two or three joined us when they heard where we were going, and we soon reached the garrison practice-ground.

This lay in rear of the long rows of stalls that composed the cavalry stables, and it proved to be a corral, which had lately been occupied by cattle and horses. Bruce told us it was the exercising-ground for the morning gallop of the horses.

It had been agreed beforehand that Captain Bullard, who had the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in the garrison, was to instruct those of us who were deficient in marksmanship. Bruce's orderly followed us with a heavy box of ammunition.

"Now, gentlemen," said the captain, as we stopped before a board target about six feet square. "I suppose you all know that there are two distinct kinds of pistol-shooting. We do the one with a big pistol and a long cartridge, anywhere from fifty to a hundred and fifty yards, and it's just the same as rifle-work. You have to bring your sights on a line and hold them there, being careful not to pull off. Miles, go and nail up a target."

Miles went to the board fence and nailed up a paper target just like those we had used at Littleton for shot-gun practice.

"Now, gentlemen, fire away," ordered Bullard. "One shot apiece; and I'll bet a dollar no one makes a bull's-eye at fifty yards."

This proved quite correct. The two-inch circle of black which formed the bull's-eye was nothing but a black speck at fifty yards. Moore was the first to fire, taking a slow, deliberate aim at arm's length. Miles, who stood near the target in a pit, put out a long pointer and marked the shot in the paper, just at the top edge.

Charley Green followed, and got on the target a little nearer. Old Mart then advanced and put in a bullet within some three inches of the bull, and the rest of us had about the same luck, all on the target, but none nearer the bull than four or six inches, while most of us were at the edge of the paper.

Then Bullard began to speak:

"You see, gentlemen, yonder is a two-foot target, covering more space than the vitals of any man in this crowd. If you can't hit a twenty-inch circle every time, you can't hit a man except by a chance shot. I notice you all shoot the same way, at arm's length. That's all very well for quick shots at short range, but it won't do for accuracy. Look here."

He was standing with his left side toward the target as he spoke, the pistol dangling loosely in his right. We heard the click of the locks, and the next moment Bullard threw up his left elbow as high as his face, resting the thumb and fingers of his open left hand on his breast. Up came his pistol hand, and the barrel of the weapon rested on the raised elbow of the marksman. Hardly taking any aim he fired, and Miles's pointer came out of the pit and rested just under the bull's eye.

"I didn't expect to hit the bull that time," said Bullard. "I was only showing you how to aim quickly and accurately. You see it took me less than three seconds to fire, and I came nearer the bull than any of you gentlemen, who aimed slowly and deliberately. Some of you took nearly half a minute to fire. You can shoot as well as I can, if you will just alter your position; that's all. Now, Mr. Moore, you take a shot. Observe me again, and then try. I raise the left elbow and put the fingers on the breast bone. That gives a hard rest with no pulse to disturb the aim. Hold your breath when you fire. You will find your front sight almost on the mark. Aim correctly. See?"

As he spoke, he fired; and Miles showed the white disk over the bull's-eye for the first time that day.

"That's the whole secret of accurate shooting

with the pistol at long range," said Bullard. "Treat it as a rifle, and get all the rest you can."

We very soon found the benefit of his advice, and our shots began to cluster round the bull's-eye in close proximity. Jack Moore and old Mart, who were both good rifle-shots already, as we knew, made bull's-eyes, and the greenest of us found very little trouble in sighting correctly over the rest made by the left elbow. Before another round could be fired it became necessary to change the target, as the holes could no longer be distinguished apart. By the time it was dark we had satisfied ourselves that we could shoot straight with a pistol, and went back to our quarters with great content.

Bullard had promised to show us what he meant by "quick shooting," that evening, and invited our party into the cellar of his quarters for the purpose.

"These heavy cartridges," he explained, "go so strong, and send a bullet so far, that it's not safe to practice above ground, unless there's a dead plain and no people behind the target, or else a bank to hold the balls. I've got a target made on purpose, and I'll show you how to shoot without danger."

The cellar of the captain's quarters proved to be large and deep, the walls being at least eight feet high. At one end of this cellar was a short tunnel, about six feet square, boarded in at the sides and ending in a clay-bank, with no wall to support it.

"There, gentlemen," said Bullard; "that little gallery cost me about twenty dollars, for mason work to arch the entrance, for boarding up the sides and putting in an iron plate above. No noise shot can hurt any one. It's bound to go into the dirt. Now please observe this target. It is made of a thick plate of steel and rings like a bell. It is just six inches square. If you hit it, you will hear the sound. If you miss it, the bank will take all you shoot in silence."

"But how are we to find our misses?" asked Moore.

"You don't want any misses. This kind of shooting is different from the other. You have only to hit a six-inch target from a distance of twenty or thirty feet at the utmost. You can begin at six feet if you like, and be sure to hit every time, moving back till you get the hang of it."

"And what if the pistol shoots over?" queried Charley Green.

"It will not 'shoot over,' as you call it. You are not to look at the sights at all."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I'll show you. In the first place, remember that this practice is for firing rapidly from a galloping horse at a galloping buffalo. You've no time to look at sights, and could not keep them steady if you had. You must point the pistol so that the barrel goes straight at the mark; the bullet is sure to go straight, too. You have to learn just how to grasp the stock, so that your barrel will point directly at the object. You can point your finger or a stick at anything, straight enough. Nothing will teach you but practice. See; I use one pistol; I know the grip of it. Observe."

There was but one dim candle in the cellar, and we could just discern Bullard's target, painted white, against the dark background of the clay. Bullard raised his revolver and fired twenty yards it begins to drop. Imagine you heard the ring of every one on the target.

"There. You see any one of those would have killed a man," he said. "Now, Mr. Moore, take your place and fire a shot. The rest follow, one after the other."

Jack Moore advanced, raised his pistol hastily and fired. A dull thud told he had missed.

"You took no aim," observed Bullard, quietly.

"But how the dickens can I aim?" asked Moore, snappishly. "I mustn't look at the sights."

"Of course not. But the sights are not the barrel. Remember that the ball goes straight out of the barrel at this range. It's only at twenty yards it begins to drop. Imagine you barrel is a stick, and try to point it straight at the target. Take your time. Aim slowly, but don't look at the sights."

Jack looked puzzled.

"I don't understand what you mean," he protested.

"Well, then, we'll try Green," said Bullard. "Come, Mr. Green, you fire a shot. You can commence at ten feet if you like."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 413.)

Snow Lost and Love Won.

BY HAP HAZARD.

A MINNESOTA winter day—a cold, white sun in a steel-blue sky—an ice-mirror, eight miles by fifteen, bordered by snow-clad hills—a village—a wolf was howling in the distance—a steep-roofed cottage—in the doorway, opening on a broad veranda, four pretty girls taking leave of a lady and gentleman of middle age—four gallants waiting on the steps.

"Come, girls. Come! come!" cries Tom Barton, impatiently.

One little magpie detaches herself from the chattering group, trips forward with a tread that a nymph might envy, looks laughingly into the four eager faces (having among them one who is a girl), and then, with a sudden leap, she is gone.

"Burnsides" in the first stages of development, shrugs her plump shoulders with a pretty shiver, and cries:

"Oh! we shall get our feet snowy!"

"Not if the lake is ice!"

A pair of stout arms suddenly darted forward—there was a scream—and somebody was lifted from her feet and borne rapidly down the path and through the gate to the sleigh, in spite of her protests:

"Let me down, you ruffian! How dare you do such a thing?"

"I dare do all that may become a man!" laughed Tom, as he placed her among the robes.

Then there was a muffled "Oh!"—a laugh, and the girl, who had been standing in the doorway, came a box on the ear which knocked off his cap—and somebody, with very rosy cheeks and fun-sparkling eyes, was left to readjust her fur cap and tippet.

Meanwhile Sadie Kingsford (a "strawberry blonde") had clapped her hands and cried:

"Oh! look at Nannie Hurst! Ha! ha! ha!"

But her laugh ended in a scream, as three fierce Romans rushed up the steps, and in a twinkling, bore away each his beautiful Sabine maiden and blended shrill soprano and less musical barytone.

Then there was a crash of bells, a fire of snow, a great waving of handkerchiefs, and (when mamma and papa Barton had closed the door and gone back to the warmth of the glowing "base-burner") a happy cuddling in the warm robes.

Down the hill and out on the glassy surface of the frozen lake, where the throng of skaters gathered around the sleigh, some racing with the maddest and blindest skill, some with a dignified and stately grace, the sleigh might fall to thirty degrees below zero before morning.

A night on the open lake meant death!

Suddenly there was a cracking of the ice, a shock, a floundering of the horses, and a shout from the driver, mingled with screams from the ladies.

Thirty seconds later the little band stood upon the ice in a group, their sleigh hopelessly wedged in the ice, one horse down with a broken leg and the other limping badly. A crack in the ice, which had caused one of the horses to fall, leaving an open space of water not more than two feet in the deepest part, had frozen over, but not strongly enough to hold the horses. Hidden by the snow they had run upon it, with the cats' paws described.

"There is no use in stopping here," said Tom. "This crack must be our salvation, by giving us a fixed guide. We can mount two girls, wrapped in the buffalo-robes, on the remaining horse, and two must walk, turn and turn about."

Tom displayed his dauntless courage. Will a stern fortitude that did not quail; Sam was

she crowned him she whispered: "Samson No. 2?" and almost choked with suppressed laughter.

There was one question to be satisfied on which Tom would have forsworn his meerschaum, to wit: did this coquettish little sprite ever have a serious moment when she could learn to love him? To-day was not the first time, by a great many, that he had carried her in his arms; but he always got his hair pulled when he tried it. And when he asked her if she really did care anything for him, she arched her brows in mock dismay, and cried:

"Love such a great bear as you? No, indeed! I'm afraid of you!"

Next to them, along the same side of the "box," sat meek little Ruth Fawley and her gallant, Sam Gardner.

She looked at him shyly out of the corner of her eye, and blushed every time he spoke to her; and during that awful moment when he was carrying her to the sleigh she would have died of shame had not she been kept in countenance by the other girls, who were "in the same boat" as Sam was a harmless young man, with a face as smooth as Ruth's own; but he wrote verses that made Ruth cry, and the head that he sketched of her was "just lovely."

Opposite them Will Hurst did homage to the charms of his "drawberry blonde." Sam had the proverbial capriciousness of temper; but there was a steadiness in Will's gaze, when he chose to be serious, which made her stand just the least bit in awe of his displeasure, though she had never seen him manifest anger.

Everybody predicted that Will would some day develop into a "solid man" in business circles. This, and the fact that he had the only full-grown mustache in the party, may have made him attractive in the girls' eyes, though he had as yet been no love-passages between them.

Last came Ned Sawyer and the tall and rather stately Lou Barton.

Ned was slight in build, with small hands and feet, light blue eyes, and a mustache, which he played the piano with spirit, sung in a tenor voice, and waltzed divinely. It was probably his elegance that attracted the girl. On his side, he liked Lou because she was by all odds the most stylish girl the village could boast.

Any other of the village swains would have thought twice before catching this rather haughty young lady off her feet; but Ned, with a young lady's self-complacency, argued that if she "was" his, he would have to take her to the village belles; they would all be glad enough to get him!

They were near the center of the lake, the nearest shore at least four miles distant, the furthest not less than eight or ten, when Sam Gardner asked:

"Isn't it getting rather dark? Hallo! it has clouded over!"

All looked up. The sky was a dull-gray pall of clouds, and the water was as black as ink. "Shouldn't wonder if we had snow," ventured Ned Sawyer. "It will spoil all the skating. That's pleasant!"

Even as he spoke, a white flake came fluttering down, then another, and another, until the air was full of the feathery crystals. "Oh! how beautiful they are!" laughed Nannie, holding up her hand to catch one.

An apprehensive look came into Tom Barton's eyes; but he laughed and said:

"Let the reins run on some artistic driving."

He was out from under the buffalo-robe which covered them all, and on the seat beside the driver, before Nannie had time to cry:

"Tom, if you desert me like this, I'll never come out with you again!"

He did not give the reins over to Sam Gardner, and he cut each of the spirited horses with the whip, so that they leaped forward at a break-neck pace.

This is fine!" cried Will Hurst, and, while his face lighted up with keen enjoyment of the rapid motion, the girls laughed in sympathy; all but Nannie, who felt surprised and a little chagrined that Tom should leave her side, even for such a lark.

"Halt, Tom! Where's your head?" cried Sam Gardner, after awhile. "You're not going in the right direction."

Hoping not to attract the notice of the others, Tom had taken a long sweep to the right, and was now heading straight for the nearest shore. Now he reined, evasively.

"Tell me how to drive!"

Thicker and thicker descended the snow-flakes. The distant shores, only marked by patches of white oak, whose brown leaves clung tenaciously to the branches, and some half-frozen, on whose steep face the snow could find no resting-place, grew faint, then indistinguishable, while the feathery flakes increased to the size of plums. Ten minutes from the time it began to snow, the ice was covered an inch deep, and the path no longer jaded over how wide a radius it ranged.

"By Jove! fellows," cried Ned Sawyer, "I don't like the look of this. Suppose we lose our way! The sun will be down in two hours, and the cold is going to be a summer night."

Everybody saw in a flash why Tom had taken the reins and turned to the nearest shore, urging his horses fairly into a runaway pace.

Ruth Fawley tremulously grasped the arm of Sam Gardner. Sadie Kingsford started forward, and tried to get upon her feet, and looked about in the faces of all. Lou Barton reached toward her brother mutely. Nannie turned out her hand toward him and said aloud:

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Tom!" cried Tom. "No losing heart. We're as good as a dozen dead people yet. It doesn't make any difference where we strike the shore. We can find a farm-house inside of half an hour. Here, Jim, take the lines. You can drive as well as I can, now. All you have to do is to give the horses their own heads. I'll pull us through. Meanwhile I'll get back into the box and cheer the faint-hearts up a bit."

"It is so good of you to come, Tom," whispered Nannie, when he was again at her side, feeling that the rheumatic old ladies have their feet cold, and their shoes slip on their winter flannels, I always put my finger in the pie. I don't deserve any credit. It is not true benevolence at all, but simply that I have it in my nature to work and to work with a will, and these everyday affairs happen to be the exciting which come in my way. I would have been all the same, no matter where I had been placed. For instance, if my sphere lay in the fashionable world, I would make more calls, see more people, know more of their hobbies, out-dress and outdance any other young lady in my set. I suppose you think I am talking of things I know nothing about."

"I don't doubt your ability. I was only thinking what conquests you would make there, and how unkind of fortune to have denied us such a queen. I wonder you can be contented here, when you might shine 'one above all compare,' Miss Yrill."

"I have never even thought of it."

"I think of it now. Mrs. Valdere has commissioned me to secure you as her guest for the season, and this visit of mine is for no other purpose."

Mrs. Valdere, his step-mother, was Xina's cousin, but for all token she had given for years, the girl's existence might have been unknown to her. Indeed, it had been recalled to a very convenient memory by the fact that Valdere, for whom she had a motherly pride and fondness, had become entangled in an objectionable love-affair.

Whether divination or secret questioning revealed the fact that Xina was both a beauty and an heiress, matters not; Valdere was sent upon an unwilling mission, which had already lost every objectionable feature.

All the sunshine went out of the house of Otis Roth when Xina left it. Something, he could not tell what, but I fancy it must have been Valdere's management, had prevented him telling her all that was in his heart before her departure. It scarcely caused him a qualm of uneasiness; he had not a doubt of Xina's understanding between them was so perfect.

ready to work like a hero, if somebody else would only lead. Ned was—rather helpless.

Ruth showed resignation; Sadie fretful helplessness; Lou resoluteness; Nannie she trusted in Tom.

"Let Sadie and Ruth ride first," said Lou, taking the arm of her escort, who now yielded to her direction.

"Wrap them up well," cautioned Tom, and started forward with Nannie at his side.

"Midget," he said to her, "I'll carry you, if I had a robe to wrap you up in, but without it you can only keep your blood in circulation by walking."

"You're always good, Tom," she replied, pressing his arm; and after a pause: "Tom, we may never have to see another day together."

"Tut! tut!" began Tom; but she interrupted him.

"It is true, isn't it?"

"There is such a possibility, certainly. I suppose I may as well admit it."

"Tom, I want to tell you something. I may never have another opportunity. Stop down."

He complied.

Suddenly raising on tiptoe she kissed him on the lips.

"There, Tom," she said, "I want to tell you with my own lips, before I have lost the power, though I have teased you so mercilessly. I have loved you all along. Oh, Tom! I have slept with your picture at my lips, and wakened in the night and found myself sobbing with sheer happiness at the thought that you loved me best in all the world. I wish I had told you this long ago, Tom, and made you happy during the time I have wasted in tormenting you."

"Why, you dear girl," murmured Tom, with tears in his eyes, "you have made me the happiest fellow in the world for over a year."

"Of course I always knew that you must really love me; but I confess that it is a little more satisfying to hear you say so," admitted honest Tom.

A new phase in the character of his lady-love was now disclosed to him. Who would have believed that so much tenderness lay hidden beneath such levity?

Suddenly Tom stopped with a suppressed cry.

"What is it, Tom?" asked Nannie.

"Midget," said Tom, in a strange voice, "if we get out of this will you marry me?"

"Oh, Tom! How can you ask such a question, on the very brink of the grave, maybe?" said his lady-love, reproachfully.

"But will you?"

"Yes, Tom."

"When?"

"As soon as you like."

"On the first day of May? That's your birthday, you know."

"Yes, dear. It is good of you to think of that."

"Honor bright, you will marry me on the first day of May?"

"Yes, Tom, if you wish it. But how strangely you talk."

"Hurrah!" yelled Tom, and caught her up and sealed the bargain on her lips in a twinkling.

"Hurrah!" he repeated to the others, who had now come up with him. "There's the shore, within a rod of where we stand. Look up! Do you see that overhanging tree? There's not two feet that on the shores of the lake. Within a stone throw over that bank are waiting for us a red-hot fire and all the cider we can drink, to say nothing of such a welcome as only old Tim Waterhouse and his hearty old dame can give!"

All looked up. The bank was hidden by snow so as to be indistinguishable, but overheard the outlines of a scraggy oak could be faintly traced, as if loomed through the gathering gloom, amid the falling snow.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted Tom again. "I have found present safety and happiness for life at the same time. Bear witness all, that this lady promises that if we come safely through this adventure, she will marry me on the first day of May!"

"Yes, Tom," laughed Nannie, fairly jumping up and down with fun, "but I didn't say what year! It may not be before the next Centennial!"

Xina.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

XINA walked home over the crisp snow, as the first flush of the morning stained the eastern sky. She had been sitting up with a neighbor's child, but the glow of exercise had taken the place of her fagged look as she opened the door. A great, fragrant wood-fire burned within, and two young men stood before it.

Roth was an everyday sight to Xina, but Valdere, who had not yet put off the furs and wraps of travel, was an immediate object of grateful interest in her eyes. Handsome, aristocratic, thoroughly at ease—Roth, poor, honest fellow! already felt keenly the contrast between them.

"Back so soon?" said he, brightening as he always did at sight of Xina. "I meant to have gone for you. How is Richier?"

"Well," she answered, and he knew she meant well beyond the possibility of earthly life forever.

Valdere, who was not personally given to humanitarianism, found himself capable of admiring acts of mercy in others. This tall, fair girl, with her coronet of golden braids, and earnest, shining eyes, looking like St. Cecilia, claimed his veneration and respect. He had the rare faculty of seeming to sympathize, and in five minutes Xina was talking to him as animatedly as though she had known him for years.

"Yes, I really don't know what the neighborhood would do without me," she laughed. "No matter what is going on, from a wedding to a child's tea-party, from naming the babies to seeing that the rheumatic old ladies have their feet warm, I always put my finger in the pie. I don't deserve any credit. It is not true benevolence at all, but simply that I have it in my nature to work and to work with a will, and these everyday affairs happen to be the exciting which come in my way. I would have been all the same, no matter where I had been placed. For instance, if my sphere lay in the fashionable world, I would make more calls, see more people, know more of their hobbies, out-dress and outdance any other young lady in my set. I suppose you think I am talking of things I know nothing about."

"I don't doubt your ability. I was only thinking what conquests you would make there, and how unkind of fortune to have denied us such a queen. I wonder you can be contented here, when you might shine 'one above all compare,' Miss Yrill."

"I have never even thought of it."

"I think of it now. Mrs. Valdere has commissioned me to secure you as her guest for the season, and this visit of mine is for no other purpose."

Mrs. Valdere, his step-mother, was Xina's cousin, but for all token she had given for years, the girl's existence might have been unknown to her. Indeed, it had been recalled to a very convenient memory by the fact that Valdere, for whom she had a motherly pride and fondness, had become entangled in an objectionable love-affair.

Whether divination or secret questioning revealed the fact that Xina was both a beauty and an heiress, matters not; Valdere was sent upon an unwilling mission, which had already lost every objectionable feature.

All the sunshine went out of the house of Otis Roth when Xina left it. Something, he could not tell what, but I fancy it must have been Valdere's management, had prevented him telling her all that was in his heart before her departure. It scarcely caused him a qualm of uneasiness; he had not a doubt of Xina's understanding between them was so perfect.

While she was being initiated in the mysteries of fashionable life under Mrs. Valdere's able tutelage, a small army of wooden men brought down the tall crests of the Yrill timber tract, and the Yrill mill of which Roth was foreman, and at most night and day, converting the great logs into piles upon piles of fresh, sweet-scented lumber, and the winter wore half away before the conscientious fellow tore himself free from his duties, and made a flying trip to the city for a sight of that bright magnet which was constantly drawing his faithful heart.

The frank, unshadowed joy shining forth from his eager eyes gave Xina a pang.

"I have thought of you every hour," he said, "the first moment they were alone together. Everybody is wanting you back—I most of all."

The girl's nature did not afford a trace of coquetry.

"You must not waste your thoughts upon me, Otis. Keep them busy upon some more profitable subject until that 'somebody' appears whom fate has set aside to fill them."

Her meaning was plain enough, but Roth, though warned, insisted upon having his answer in words so decisive that he had not a hope left.

Valdere had a smile as he noted the change from his previous sunny countenance in one